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ABSTRACT

This text provides articles on the practical and principled uses of video cameras and VCRs in the English-as-a-Second-Language classrooms. Articles in this volume include: (1) "Teaching Communication Skills with Authentic Video" (Susan Stempleski); (2) "Using Video in Theme-Based Curricula" (Fredricka L. Stoller); (3) "Teaching Young Children with Video" (Barry Tomalin); (4) "Using Video To Teach Communicative English to Students of International Business" (Ulla Ladau-Harjulin); (5) "Shooting Your Class: The Videodrama Approach to Language Acquisition (Tracey Forrest); (6) "Using a Video Camera To Evaluate Learners' Classroom Performance" (Jack Lonergan); (7) "Criteria for Selecting Video Materials" (Paul Arcario); (8) "An Overview of Currently Available ESL/EFL Video Materials" (Peter Thomas with Dean Brodkey and Chuck Passentino); (9) "Notes from an Olde-Tyme Producer of Language Videotapes" (Elliot S. Glass); (10) "Factors Affecting the Production of Video for Language Teaching and Learning" (Joe Hambrook). Appendixes include a glossary of video terms and acronyms, organizational resources, and bibliography. (Contains eight pages of references.) (NAV)

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ED 388 082

# VIDEO
## IN SECOND LANGUAGE TEACHING:

## USING, SELECTING, AND PRODUCING VIDEO FOR THE CLASSROOM

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Susan Stempleski
and
Paul Arcario
*Editors*

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# INTRODUCTION

Interest in video as an instructional tool has intensified as video cassette recorders and video cameras have become available to teachers. It is difficult to be precise about the extent of the use of video in the teaching of English to speakers of other languages, but one fact is clear: the field is experiencing a video "boom." Teachers around the world are experimenting with the medium and using it to motivate learners and to enhance their language lessons. Teacher education programs are beginning to offer courses and workshops on the uses of video in language instruction, and more and more video materials are being produced and marketed specifically for teaching English to nonnative speakers.

The 10 chapters in this volume represent the work of 12 language teachers, teacher educators, and video producers with a special interest in the use and production of video for second language teaching. The chapters offer practical and principled advice to both experienced and inexperienced teachers who are using or plan to use video in their classrooms. The authors' primary aim is to acquaint teachers with successful practices and developments in using video in second language teaching: the what's, why's, and how's of using video with students.

## Organization of the Book

The volume is divided into three sections. The first section, Using Video, contains six chapters describing the use of prerecorded video cassettes in particular teaching situations and the use of a video camera in the classroom. Selecting Video contains two chapters, one on criteria for selecting appropriate video materials for language teaching and one on currently available videos for teaching English to speakers of other languages. The third section, Producing Video, includes an overview of the video production process and an examination of the factors affecting the professional production of video for language teaching and learning. Three appendixes at the end of the volume contain a glossary of video acronyms and technical terms, a list of organizational resources, and a bibliography on video in language teaching.

## Chapter Summaries

### *1. Teaching Communication Skills With Authentic Video*

Susan Stempleski introduces the use of authentic video and television material (feature films, documentaries, and so on) in the classroom. Based on the experience of classroom users of video worldwide, she answers some of the most frequently asked questions about authentic video material, outlines general guidelines for its use in intensive language practice, and summarizes video-based teaching techniques and activities used by experienced teachers.

### *2. Using Video in Theme-Based Curricula*

In a discussion of the use of video material within the context of content-based curricula, Fredricka L. Stoller describes options for previewing, viewing, and postviewing activities. Four lesson plans illustrate how to combine video-related activities to create and to enhance meaningful classroom activities and theme-based units.

### *3. Teaching Young Children With Video*

Barry Tomalin discusses the use of video in the teaching of young children and describes ways to use the medium to meet their needs. In the context of a three-stage approach to video-based lesson planning, he presents a variety of classroom activities meant to promote intellectual activity among children and to transfer beneficial effects to the viewing of television and video at home.

### 4. Using Video to Teach Communicative English to Students of International Business

In Ulla Ladau-Harjulin's approach, business dramas and management training videos are integrated into the classroom teaching of oral communication skills. Her examples of video-based materials for students of economics and international business serve as models for developing similar materials and exercises based on any video drama for students at the intermediate and advanced levels of language instruction.

### 5. Shooting Your Class: The Videodrama Approach to Language Acquisition

Tracey Forrest discusses Videodrama, a strategies-based approach to language acquisition and instruction, in light of one language activity, improvisation. Videodrama expands the scope of language activities by allowing students the opportunity to examine and revise firsthand the linguistic and paralinguistic elements that often elude them in the normal course of classroom work.

### 6. Using a Video Camera to Evaluate Learners' Classroom Performance

According to Jack Lonergan, recording the language and communicative performance of students on video cassette affords opportunities for evaluation that differ from those offered by samples of students' writing. Two questions are (a) what can be evaluated, and how?, and (b) what are the different roles of the teacher, the learner, and the rest of the class during an evaluation session? Lonergan's evaluation procedure begins at the discourse level.

### 7. Criteria for Selecting Video Materials

Criteria for selecting a video program for second language teaching depend not only on formal aspects of the medium but also on how the video will be used. Paul Arcario outlines factors to keep in mind when choosing video for comprehension-type activities (based on language generated by the video itself) and for stimulus-type activites (intended to promote language use by the students about the video).

### 8. An Overview of Currently Available ESL/EFL Video Materials

Peter Thomas, Dean Brodkey, and Chuck Passentino summarize and analyze the contents of the *ESOL Video Materials Directory*, a descriptive list (available from TESOL) of nearly 200 video titles designed for English as a foreign language (EFL) and English as a second language (ESL) instruction and teacher training. The article surveys trends in video materials development and guides teachers, teacher educators, and administrators interested in knowing the sorts of videos available for classroom use.

### 9. Notes From an Olde-Tyme Producer of Language Videotapes

In his description of the procedures involved in the preproduction, production, and postproduction phases of producing videos for language teaching, Elliot S. Glass focuses on two categories of language video. Student-produced videos involve learners in their production, whereas teacher-produced videos require learner participation only during and after viewing.

### 10. Factors Affecting the Production of Video for Language Teaching and Learning

Joe Hambrook examines the context in which professional producers of language teaching videos operate. He addresses (a) the constraints on professional EFL/ESL video production and their effect on content, methodology, and actual production procedures; (b) the extent to which video production caters to multimedia requirements; (c) the extent to which video producers effectively respond to learners' and teachers' needs; and (d) technical aspects of EFL/ESL-specific video production.

*Susan Stempleski*
*Paul Arcario*

# I

# USING VIDEO

## 1

# TEACHING COMMUNICATION SKILLS WITH AUTHENTIC VIDEO[1]

***Susan Stempleski***, **Hunter College, City University of New York; Teachers College, Columbia University**

Most advocates of video in language teaching have focused on helping students to understand the content of a video sequence or on using video to present language models. The hypothesis is that teachers need to change the essentially passive viewing habits of students to create a climate conducive to learning (Lonergan, 1984). Because it can present a total communicative situation, video has been recognized as a valuable resource for intensive language study. A relatively recent trend is to use the medium to stimulate oral and written communication among students (Stempleski & Tomalin, 1989).

Another trend in the use of video for language teaching, readily apparent to anyone who has surveyed Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) annual convention programs since 1986, is the use of authentic material—video or television material designed for entertainment rather than for language teaching. Likewise, articles on video in second language teaching reflect a central concern with the use of authentic material (Brinton & Gaskill, 1987; Griffin, 1980; Hill, 1978; Kerridge, 1982; Lynch, 1985; Maxwell, 1983; Olivier, 1985; Skirble, 1979; Tudor, 1987). Of the British educational institutions surveyed by MacKnight (1983), 91% of those investing in video equipment used off-air recordings from television. The situation is similar in the United States. In a 1990 survey of United States–based members of the TESOL Video Interest section, 91% of the respondents reported using off-air recordings of regular television broadcasts or commercially available, prerecorded feature films, documentaries, and music videos (Stempleski, 1990).

The increasing popularity of authentic video in second language classrooms has led to surprisingly little research in the area. Evidence of a rationale for the use of authentic video material in language education is found in only two relevant empirical studies (Garza, 1986; Kongable, 1987). The absence of definitive research into the effectiveness of authentic video in second language teaching, however, has not deterred educators from advocating its use. The literature on the use of video in language teaching is in some ways vast, but even the most enthusiastic advocate would be forced to agree with Tomalin (1988) that knowledge about the use of video in the language classroom is proto-theoretical.

Although as yet untested scientifically, a number of working hypotheses based on classroom experience have evolved into a kind of orthodoxy. This chapter introduces the tenets of that orthodoxy. Based on the practical experience of video experts and enthusiasts worldwide, it answers some of the questions most frequently asked about the use of authentic video material in language teaching, outlines general guidelines for its use in intensive language practice, and presents a sampling of video-based teaching techniques and activities consistent with a communicative approach.

## Video Materials: ESL/EFL Versus Authentic

### *ESL/EFL Video*

Video courses for English as a second language or English as a foreign language (ESL/EFL), such as *Family Album, U.S.A.*, *Grapevine*, and *The Lost Secret*, present graded language materials geared to students' interests. The most sophisticated ESL/EFL videos are usually part of a multimedia package that, in addition to the videos themselves, includes viewing guides, student workbooks, video transcripts, teachers' manuals, and audio cassettes. Because such materials are designed with the needs of both ESL/EFL learners and teachers in mind, their practical advantage, particularly in low-level classes, is obvious: teachers can, in a relatively short time, preview video sequences, select viewing activities, and adapt the language exercises to fit their students' needs and different classroom situations.

### *Authentic Video*

In contrast to ESL/EFL video, authentic material is ungraded with regard to the language used. Additionally, the topics and situations presented may not always be geared to learners' interests. Teachers wishing to use authentic video have to spend more time previewing and selecting appropriate material before using it in their classes (see the chapter by Arcario in this volume).

Why bother to use authentic material? What can authentic video do that ESL/EFL video cannot? Some compelling reasons for using authentic video in high-beginning through advanced-level classes follow.

***It presents real language.*** Not all the language in authentic material is real in the sense of being unscripted, but it is real in that it is intended for native speakers—people who are already familiar with the language. It is ungraded and unsimplified English, spoken at a normal pace and in typical accents. Such language is also real in that it is current; that is, it makes use of idioms and expressions common in contemporary English-speaking environments.

***It provides an authentic look at the culture.*** Feature films and other programs intended for native speakers of English show learners how people in English-speaking countries live—their values, customs, clothing, food, and interactions with one another—and how they look at themselves. Carefully chosen authentic video material can provide countless topics for cross-cultural discussion and writing activities, heightening learners' awareness of their own culture in addition to that of people who speak the target language.

***It gives students practice in dealing with the medium.*** If students are to take in and process films and television effectively, they must practice dealing with the medium. In this "video age" it makes sense to incorporate video-based media into teaching so that students can become more effective and critical viewers. Most students already watch an enormous amount of television. Teachers can help make students' everyday viewing a learning experience.

***It motivates learners.*** ESL/EFL learners have a sense of accomplishment when they comprehend material, especially spoken material, intended for native speakers of English. Additionally, when learners successfully deal with and understand "the real thing" in a classroom situation, they may be motivated to seek out and try to understand other authentic materials on their own. They realize that, with a bit of extra effort and practice, along with some guidance from the teacher, "real English" is not beyond their comprehension.

## Sources of Authentic Video Materials

As for the legality of the educational use of authentic video material, either off-air recordings or prerecorded video cassettes for rental or purchase, teachers must adhere to the regulations that are legally enforceable in the country in which they teach.

### *Off-Air Recordings*

Teachers who have a video cassette recorder (VCR) can record material off air from broadcast television programs—an obvious advantage in countries that air television programs in English. Regulations with regard to off-air recordings vary from country to country. Before using such material, teachers should familiarize themselves with their country's copyright regulations regarding the educational use of off-air recordings. In some countries, the law can be less than "teacher friendly." In the United States, for example, current copyright guidelines authorize nonprofit educational institutions to record television programs off air, but the videotapes must be used within 10 school days and erased after 45 calendar days.

In most countries, it is possible to record educational broadcasts for use in class, but sometimes the institution must obtain a license to copy. Because copyright regulations for educational broadcasts may differ from those applying to other types of broadcasts, teachers need to be aware of the difference between an educational broadcast (a program shown as part of an educational broadcast service) and other programs they want to use for educational purposes.

For teachers in non-English-speaking settings, recordings of English language broadcasts by satellite would seem a fruitful source of authentic material for their classes. Unfortunately, the legal status of such broadcasts is still obscure in most countries.

### Prerecorded Video Cassettes

In certain countries, copyright regulations prohibit the use of purchased or rented prerecorded video cassettes of feature films, music videos, and the like without prior permission from the distributors or producers concerned. In other countries, such as the United States, copyright regulations permit the use of *original* copies of purchased or rented cassettes as long as they are part of "face-to-face" teaching activities. Any duplication of prerecorded video cassettes, including purchased or rented materials, is illegal.

## General Guidelines for Teaching With Video

As Allan (1985) reminds us, there is no one right way to use video in the classroom. Nevertheless, teachers experienced in using the medium for intensive language practice and presentation generally agree on the following guidelines.

### Show Short Sequences

Video, particularly authentic material intended for native speakers, is an extremely dense medium. Material from feature films, for example, can often be successfully exploited if presented in "bite-sized" chunks that are more easily digestible for the learner. A 2- to 3-minute sequence can provide enough material for a 1-hour lesson.

### Allow for Repeated Viewing

Once is not enough. Learners need to see and hear a sequence several times if they are to understand the situation, identify the characters, and observe other facets of the video closely.

### Encourage Active Viewing

Learners need challenging activities and tasks that require them to focus on different aspects of the video, such as general comprehension, cultural differences, vocabulary, and specific language functions and structures.

### *Present Activities Before Viewing*

Learners focus their attention more effectively on the viewing activity if their particular task is presented and explained to them before they view the video sequence.

### *Familiarize Yourself With the Material*

The teacher should view the entire sequence before presenting it to the class, preferably several times and with the video script in hand, if available.

### *Get to Know Your Equipment*

The teacher should practice with the equipment to be used in class. The counter can help locate the sequence to be shown. With the counter set at zero at the start of the video cassette, the teacher can note the counter numbers at the start of the sequence used and at any other points to highlight during the lesson.

## Some Video-Based Teaching Activities

A tremendous variety of activities can accompany the use of video in the language classroom. What teachers do with a particular video sequence depends on the learners' needs, the teacher's objectives, and the video itself. Different types of sequences (drama, news broadcasts, and other formats) lend themselves to different techniques. The key to planning successful video-based lessons is to select a sequence first and then choose activities appropriate to that particular sequence. Techniques can be combined to produce a variety of activities for a lesson based on a single sequence, or for a series of lessons based on several related sequences.

In addition to being a flexible vehicle for comprehension practice or for the presentation of new language, video, particularly in its authentic forms, effectively stimulates language production, especially with intermediate- and advanced-level students. Using video as a stimulus for classroom communication usually involves (a) student interaction in pairs and groups and (b) manipulation of the television technology to create an information gap that the learners must fill. Compared with film and broadcast television, video technology offers the obvious advantages of stop/start, rewind/replay, sound on/off, and freeze-frame controls. These facilities make it possible for the teacher to present different sections of the video once or several times in different ways. For example, a teacher may decide to turn the sound control off and show only the video pictures to the students. Because it is relatively easy to stop, start, and rewind the video to any point with a fair degree of accuracy, a single video extract can be used repeatedly within a single lesson. Options for presenting the video include:

- showing only the pictures
- playing only the soundtrack
- showing the pictures to some of the students and letting others hear the soundtrack
- playing the pictures and sound together
- playing only the beginning of a video sequence
- playing only the end of a sequence
- leaving out the middle of a sequence
- playing parts of the sequence out of order.

In the activities described below, teachers are less interested in teaching the language presented on the video soundtrack than in encouraging the students to produce new language about the video, thus generating new ideas and engaging in real communication. The ideas presented are suitable not only for exploiting authentic video material but also for working with ESL/EFL video material. The activities are organized according to the options that technology allows for video presentation in the classroom.

### *Option 1: Show Only the Pictures*

Commonly referred to as "silent viewing," this presentation technique involves playing a video sequence with the sound turned down and having students decide what is happening and what the speakers are probably saying. The technique is appropriate for use with dramatic sequences containing visual clues about the situation or relationships among the characters.

***What's the Situation?*** The teacher selects a drama sequence with clearly identifiable location, characters, and situation, such as the scene in *The African Queen* in which Charlie Allnut joins Rose Sayer and her brother for tea. Before presenting the sequence for the first time, the teacher writes the following questions on the blackboard and tells the students they are to look for the answers as they watch the video:

- Where are these people?
- Why are they there?
- What is their relationship?
- What is going on?

Students then view the sequence with the sound turned down. After viewing, they work in small groups, discussing the questions and giving reasons for their answers. The teacher then replays the sequence with the sound turned up. As a class or in small groups, students then discuss their answers in relation to the new information they have received from the soundtrack.

***What Are They Saying?*** This technique works well with drama or documentary sequences containing strong visual clues to the dialogue, especially drama sequences involving a conversation between two people. An example is the dinner scene in *Breaking Away*, in which Mr. Stoller is complaining to his wife about the food she has served. Before playing the sequence with the sound turned down, the teacher tells the students to watch and try to predict what the people are saying. After viewing the sequence, students work in pairs and write a dialogue of 6 to 10 lines to accompany the pictures. The task is easier if the teacher plays the sequence straight through once and then uses the pause button during a second viewing to stop the video from time to time, allowing the students time to write what they think an individual character has just said. (With documentary sequences, students can be asked to write a voice-over narration.) After practicing with their partners, students then perform their dialogues or read their voice-over scripts for the class. Finally, students watch the videotape with the sound turned up and compare the scripts they have written with the words on the soundtrack.

***What Can You See?*** This activity requires a sequence containing pictures of clearly identifiable objects, such as a sequence from a cooking show in which the cook handles different kitchen utensils or recipe ingredients. Students receive a list of 10 to 12 objects, some that appear in the video and some that do not, and check off the items they see as they view the video with the sound turned down. After viewing, students compare their lists in pairs. The teacher then replays the video sequence, using the pause button to freeze the picture on the screen from time to time, and allows volunteers to name the items they see. If, as is usually the case with cooking shows, the items are named on the soundtrack, the teacher can play the video with the sound turned up and allow the class to hear the presenter identify the target items.

### Option 2: Play Only the Soundtrack

In this technique, students hear the soundtrack without seeing the pictures. (The monitor screen can be covered with newspaper or a large piece of cardboard.) From the dialogue and sound effects, students predict what they will see.

***Picture This.*** Like "What's the Situation?", this activity requires students to speculate about the setting, action, and characters of a video sequence, but the speculation here is based on audible clues such as gunshots, crickets chirping, or lines of dialogue. An example of a sequence that works well for this activity is the scene in *Places in the Heart* in which Ku Klux Klan members attack the black cotton picker, Moses. Before playing the sequence, the teacher writes the following questions on the blackboard:

- Where does the scene take place?
- How many characters are in the scene?
- How are they dressed?
- What are they doing?

After hearing the soundtrack, students work in small groups, discussing the questions and giving reasons for their answers. The teacher then plays the sequence with both sound and pictures. Finally, students discuss their answers in relation to the visual information presented.

***What's the Product?*** This activity is appropriate for television commercials that employ sound effects, music, or both but do not name the product or service advertised on the soundtrack (or postpone naming it until the end). Many car commercials fall into this category. The teacher allows students to listen to the soundtrack of a commercial, stopping if necessary just before the product or service is named. In small groups students speculate on the product being advertised, giving reasons for their answers. Asking groups to produce a list of five possible answers stimulates more conversation. After groups have developed and discussed their lists, the teacher plays the complete commercial with both pictures and sound. Volunteers from groups that guessed correctly tell the class how they were able to guess what was being advertised.

As a variation, the teacher can show five or six commercials and have the students match them with a scrambled list of the names of the advertised products.

***Describe the Speaker.*** This activity, which is good for reviewing descriptive adjectives with beginning-level students, works best with a sequence in which the voice of only one character is heard, such as a one-sided telephone conversation or a monologue. The teacher distributes or writes on the blackboard a list of adjectives, some that describe the character in the sequence and some that do not. For example,

young old tall short dark fair fat thin

The teacher plays the soundtrack of the sequence and asks students to imagine what the character looks like. Students listen and circle the adjectives they think describe the person whose voice they hear. Young learners can be asked to draw a picture of the person they hear. The teacher then plays the sequence with sound and vision. Students compare what they expected with what they see on the videotape.

### *Option 3: Show the Pictures to Some, Let Others Hear the Soundtrack*

This technique, sometimes referred to as "split viewing," involves letting half the class see the scene (pictures only or pictures and sound) and allowing the rest of the class to hear the soundtrack only.

***What's the Story?*** To carry out the activity, the teacher needs two classrooms in addition to an audio cassette player and an audio cassette recording of the video soundtrack. The class is divided into two groups, one consisting of *viewers,* who see the pictures but do not hear the soundtrack, and the other, of *listeners,* who hear the soundtrack but do not see the pictures. In one room, viewers are shown the sequence with the sound turned down while in another room listeners hear the recording of the soundtrack. Viewers and listeners are then brought together to work in pairs and produce an accurate and complete description, written or oral, of what happens on the video. To guide students, teachers can give both groups a list of questions to serve as the basis for discussion and summary making:

- Where does this scene take place?
- How many people are in the scene?
- Can you name them and tell who they are?

This activity has been successfully applied to the scene in *A Passage to India* in which Aziz, an Indian Muslim doctor, encounters Mrs. Moore, an elderly British lady, in a mosque at night and reminds her that she should have taken off her shoes.

***Tell Me What's Happening.*** This less complicated version of split viewing works best in sequences with sound effects that give clues to the action but with relatively little dialogue, such as the scene in *Stand By Me* in which the boys jump off the bridge to avoid an oncoming train. The teacher divides the class into two groups: viewers (facing the television screen) and listeners (facing away from the screen). The teacher plays the video with sound and picture. As the action unfolds, viewers tell listeners what they see on the screen. After playing the video, the teacher asks one or two listeners to sum up what they have learned about the story. Then the whole group watches the sequence again with the sound and picture. Finally, listeners discuss with viewers the differences between what they were told and what they saw on the screen.

### *Option 4: Play the Pictures and Sound Together*

This option, unlike Options 1, 2, and 3, does not involve showing sound and pictures separately. In the following activities the students see the pictures and hear the soundtrack simultaneously. Students' interest and language use are stimulated by viewing tasks that require the class to focus on particular aspects of the video, such as factual information, cultural features, or dialogue.

***Five W's and H (Who, What, When, Where, Why, and How).*** This activity works well with brief excerpts from news programs or documentaries in which a single presenter introduces a subject, such as the 1st minute of the "Koko" sequence on the National Geographic documentary *Gorilla*. The teacher begins by writing six question words on the board:

Who? What? When? Where? Why? How?

After explaining that news programs and documentaries usually present factual information concerning the "five w's and h" of a subject, the teacher plays the video sequence twice. First, the students only watch. The second time they make brief notes under the six headings. Students then work in groups to compare and discuss their notes. As a follow-up activity, students can write a short news article based on the video sequence.

If the teacher wishes to give the students practice in producing question forms, the students can use the video to play a variation of the "Jeopardy" game. Working in pairs or small groups, one student gives an answer, such as "Near San Francisco." Other students ask a question that fits the answer. In the case of the "Koko" sequence, an appropriate question is, "Where does Koko live?"

***Culture Comparison.*** This activity requires a drama or documentary sequence illustrating several features of life in the target culture, such as a high school graduation or a wedding. The aim of the activity is to stimulate discussion about life in the students' own countries compared with life in the target culture. First, students draw a line down the middle of a sheet of paper, writing the name of the target culture on one side of the line and the name of their own country on the other side. Students watch the video sequence and look for three things in the sequence that differ from their country and three things that are similar. They are encouraged to take brief notes during the viewing. Following the viewing, they work in small groups, discussing the differences and similarities they have observed.

***Dialogue Cards.*** This activity requires a sequence with clear, simple dialogue, such as the following from the scene in the book shop in *Hannah and Her Sisters*:

Lee: Isn't this great? They have everything here.
Elliot: Yes, it's . . . it's wonderful.
Lee: What book did you want to buy?
Elliot: What? Book?
Lee: Your book? You wanted to buy a book?
Elliot: Oh, book! Oh, no, I . . . I'm killing time. I . . . I . . . I just, uh, want to browse, uh . . . .

The teacher writes each line of the dialogue on a separate index card, making enough cards to give a complete set to each group of three to four students in the class. After watching the sequence, students order the cards as they think the conversation occurred on the video. The teacher then replays the sequence, and students check their answers. Once having determined the correct order of the dialogue, the group can practice reading the dialogue aloud. An interesting variation of this activity is to have groups attempt to put the dialogue in order *before* viewing the video.

### *Option 5: Play Only the Beginning*

In this technique the teacher shows only the beginning of a sequence and asks the class to predict what they will see and hear later in the video story.

***Sights and Sounds.*** This activity works well with sequences from documentaries, television news programs, or dramas in which the situation is quickly and clearly established. The students' task is to view the beginning of a sequence and predict the sights they expect to see, the sounds they expect to hear, and the words they expect to be spoken on the soundtrack. For example, advanced-level students might view the 1st minute of *The Search for Herod's Harbor*, a documentary about an archaeological dig in Israel. After viewing just enough of the sequence to establish the topic, students in pairs draw up their lists of predicted sights, sounds, and words. In the case of *The Search for Herod's Harbor*, after viewing only 60 seconds of the video students are usually quite accurate in predicting what they will see in the next 5-minute section, naming sights such as "people digging," sounds such as "waves crashing along the shore," and words such as "ancient" and "find." After drawing up their lists, students compare and discuss their answers as a class or in small groups. Finally, the teacher plays the entire sequence, allowing students to see which of their predictions were correct.

### *Option 6: Play Only the End*

Unlike Option 5, in which students predict what will happen in the future, this technique, sometimes referred to as "reverse prediction," requires students to talk or write about what they think happened before a particular video sequence.

***Predict the Past.*** This activity works best with dramatic sequences that end with a character or characters in a difficult predicament, such as being arrested. The teacher plays the end of the sequence once or several times. The students' task is to explain what led up to what they see and hear. In pairs or small groups students discuss what they have heard and seen on the video and suggest a probable scenario for what happened before. Students then view the entire sequence and compare their predictions with the actual story.

### *Option 7: Leave Out the Middle*

This technique involves playing two separate but related incidents from a drama and asking students to suggest a story line connecting the two.

***Fill That Video Gap.*** To make the activity work, teachers need to select a drama sequence with a strong story line and several separate incidents, such as the sequence from Woody Allen's "Oedipus Wrecks" in *New York Stories* in which a magician performs the Chinese box illusion and the elderly woman vanishes. The teacher plays about a minute of the sequence and then stops the video. In small groups, students discuss the situation and characters presented. Using the fast forward button, the teacher then advances the videotape for about 2 minutes of screen time (with *no picture* on the screen) and plays the video for another minute. In groups, students discuss the second sequence and then compose a bridge story (orally or in writing) to link the two sequences.

## *Option 8: Play the Parts Out of Order*

This technique involves dividing a video sequence into separate clips and playing them in an order different from that on the original video. For this technique to work, the teacher needs to choose clips with a logical cause-and-effect relationship.

***Scrambled Video Clips.*** The teacher plays three, four, or five video clips out of order, identified as A, B, C, and so on. For example, the teacher might divide the railroad bridge scene in *Stand by Me* into five sections and present them as follows:

A: two boys in the water below a railroad bridge and two other boys on the bridge looking down at them
B: four boys about to walk across the railroad bridge
C: two boys running ahead of a moving train on the railroad bridge
D: one boy yelling "Train!"
E: two boys jumping off the bridge into the water to avoid the oncoming train

After viewing the clips, students work in small groups to determine the probable story line and fit the clips into a correct or plausible order. In this case, the correct order is B-D-C-E-A. To carry out this activity efficiently, the teacher needs either to create a dub of the original material with the sections recorded out of order or to be very adept at using the counter on the classroom videotape player.

## *Option 9: Don't Play Anything*

Teachers experienced with classroom technology know that some days, for reasons beyond their control, video equipment is not available or is not working properly. The following activities involve postponing the actual viewing of the video until a later lesson and have the added value of heightening students' interest in the video.

***Scene Prediction.*** The teacher tells the class the subject of the sequence they will view in the next lesson, such as a murder or a robbery. Working in small groups, students predict the answers to the following questions:

- Who will you see?
- Where will the scene take place?
- What will you see?
- What are some of the lines of dialogue you will hear?

Groups then take turns reporting their answers to the class. The teacher gives no indication as to which answers are correct. Working individually, students write a one- or two-paragraph description of the video sequence they will see in the next class. After viewing the actual sequence in the next class, students compare their descriptions with the video story and discuss the similarities and differences.

***Write the Dialogue.*** The teacher dictates a synopsis of a scene from a drama sequence, such as the following description of Alvy's reunion with Annie in *Annie Hall*: "A man loves a woman. He hasn't seen her for several months. He has a date to meet her in a restaurant in Los Angeles. She arrives at the restaurant. He proposes marriage to her and asks her to move back to New York with him." Students, working in pairs, write a 20-line dialogue to accompany the scene they will view in the next class.

***Asking Real Questions.*** The teacher announces the subject of a documentary sequence or television news item, such as "Alaska." Volunteers take turns saying what they know about the subject. Students then work in small groups, making up a list of 10 questions they have on the subject. Groups take turns reading their questions to the whole class, and volunteers suggest possible answers. In the next lesson students view the documentary sequence or television news item to find out what answers, if any, are provided on the video.

## Conclusion

Video can be used in many ways to teach communication skills. In this brief overview of recent trends in using the medium in ESL/EFL classrooms, my intention is to inspire teachers to experiment with authentic video material in their own classes. With a little practice, teachers usually find video easy to use, and the resulting motivation and language learning on the part of students are well worth the effort. Used imaginatively, authentic video can be an exciting and stimulating experience for both students and teachers.

## Note

[1] An earlier version of this article was given as a plenary address at the 10th annual convention of TESOL Greece, Athens, in April 1989. Some of the activities described appear in Stempleski and Tomalin (1990).

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## 2

# USING VIDEO IN THEME-BASED CURRICULA[1]

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> The claim that language is most effectively learned in context is hardly a new or revolutionary one. Regardless of the specific methodology used, language teachers have generally found it desirable to present new items through meaningful content; in fact, "contextualizing" lesson presentations has become a widely accepted rule of good teaching. (Brinton, Snow, & Wesche, 1989, p. 1)

With increasing frequency, English as a second language (ESL) professionals at all levels of instruction are turning to content-based instruction to meet the needs of their students. This trend is reflected in the growing number of publications addressing this area (e.g., Benesch, 1988; Brinton, Snow, & Wesche, 1989; Cantoni-Harvey, 1987; Crandall, 1987; Fein & Baldwin, 1986). In general, content-based instruction, characterized by the integration of content with language teaching objectives, has been adopted in reaction to educational approaches that consider language learning itself as content and ignore the learning of subject matter. In educational settings where language learning is poorly coordinated with the learning of content, students often fail to reach their potential as language users (Mohan, 1986).

In content-based settings, content and language are mutually reinforcing even though learners are encouraged to focus their attention on meaning instead of on language. The content provided is not merely a means for practicing language; rather language becomes the vehicle with which to explore content (Eskey, 1984).

One popular form of content-based instruction is the theme- or topic-based language course, which is structured around a series of topics, of interest to the students, that form the backbone of the curriculum (Brinton, Snow, & Wesche, 1989, p. 14). Topics such as environmental crises, culture shock, population explosion, energy, corporate responsibility, and American education serve as the foundation of curricular units that integrate a variety of reading, writing, speaking, listening, and study skills activities. In these instructional settings many types of instructional materials, including videotapes, can be brought in to develop the theme. (See Stoller, 1990, for further discussion.)

## Video in Theme-Based Curricula

The benefits of using videos in a theme-based curriculum are many and varied. First, videos can (a) introduce a new thematic unit; (b) introduce new aspects of a theme already under consideration; (c) develop thematic information previously introduced in reading passages, lectures, and other classroom activities through a new medium of instruction; or (d) wrap up a thematic unit. In sum, videos offer students significant experiences from which to draw for written and oral communication while they explore a thematic topic.

In addition to their valuable content, videos expose students to authentic speech forms in the target language not normally encountered in the more restricted environment of the ESL classroom. Furthermore, videos bring "an air of reality into the classroom" (Lonergan, 1983, p. 69; Geddes, 1982, p. 64) by exposing students to speakers, sociocultural issues, and uses of the language (Maxwell, 1983; McGroarty & Galvan, 1985) representative of the target language and culture.

Videos, like other theme-based materials, are effective springboards for other content-based classroom activities. They provide background information and proper stimuli for subsequent reading, writing, speaking, and listening activities. In this sense videos should be seen as means to an end rather than as ends in themselves (Morley, 1981). That is, the screening of a video should be the catalyst for subsequent thematic development and language use rather than a simple viewing session that terminates at the end of the video. (See Morley and Lawrence, 1971, and Willis, 1983a, 1983b, for further discussion.) Videos, like films, should not stand alone in the instructional process:

> Their productivity depends in great measure on how ably they are used. Their potential is attained when they serve as an rich experience which the instructor and students relate to other experience, interpret, generalize, talk back to, think critically about, and respond to in other intellectual ways. The instructor who understands this principle does not "show" films but USES them, making them a vital part of the course and a memorable learning experience for students. (Sayer-Higgins & Lemler, 1975, cited in Morley, 1981, p. 120)

## Making the Most of Videos

To take the greatest advantage of videos in a thematic unit, teachers should integrate previewing, viewing, and postviewing activities into their lessons. The nature and length of these activities depend on the video selected, the students' needs, the students' ages and language proficiency levels, and instructional objectives in addition to the more mundane concerns of time for instruction and availability of videos.

The following taxonomy of previewing, viewing, and postviewing activities illustrates the versatility of videos in content-based classrooms. The examples, though geared to the interests of adult students in academically oriented programs, can be adapted to the needs and interests of elementary, secondary, adult, and vocational learners. In general, teachers who recognize the needs of their students and have clear instructional objectives should be able to use these and other activities to enhance video lessons as well as thematic units as a whole.

Following the taxonomy are four lesson plans that integrate previewing, viewing, and postviewing activities into complete video lessons. The lesson plans illustrate how video-related activities can be combined to create and enhance meaningful classroom activities and theme-based units.

### *Previewing Activities*

The primary purpose of previewing activities is to prepare students to see the video by means of activating schema—that is, tapping students' background knowledge or tying newly introduced information to materials previously introduced in a thematic unit. In all cases previewing activities are meant to aid comprehension of the video in addition to enhancing the thematic unit.

The previewing activities below are options; they are not listed in order of preference, nor is the list all-inclusive. Teachers should select and adapt activities that evolve naturally out of the video and meet the needs of the students as well as fit the goals of the class.

***Class surveys.*** Students interview classmates about issues related to the content of the video. The questions, generated by the instructor, should highlight issues, concepts, or problems that surface in the video. The questions should either encourage students to use information presented during other thematic unit activities or tap students' background knowledge. The discussion accompanying the survey will leave the students better prepared to see the video.

Class surveys can be conducted in a variety of ways. Students can ask each other the same question(s), or students can be given separate questions to ask their classmates. In the latter approach, students engage in more authentic interchanges of information, and each student becomes the "expert" on his or her particular topic. Once the class surveys are completed, students can report their findings in pairs, in groups, or to the whole class. (See Tables *2* and 4 and the corresponding discussion for examples of class surveys.)

***Problem resolution.*** Students are presented with a problem that highlights issues from the video. In pairs or in groups, students discuss and attempt to resolve the problem, reporting possible solutions to the class. (See Table 1 and the corresponding discussion for an example.)

***Video title discussion.*** Students examine the title of the video and speculate on the content of the video. This quick activity can be completed in small groups or as a class, the former allowing for more discussion and participation.

***Brainstorming.*** Students, working in groups, consider a problem or issue related to the video, and "let loose a hail of possible solutions or suggestions, in random order as they occur to them" (Ur, 1981, p.

25). A rapid activity like this one activates background information, preparing the students for the video screening. (See Table 3 and the corresponding discussion for an example.)

***Consideration of a film summary.*** Students skim a written summary of the video for the main ideas of the video, scan the summary for specific details, or both. Teacher-generated questions help students locate information deemed most important for comprehension. Instead of giving students a passage to read, teachers can present a short lecture that summarizes the main points of the video. Students either simply listen to the lecture or take notes.

***Information-gap exercises.*** After introducing students to the topic of the video by means of a written summary, lecture, or informal presentation, students fill in a grid similar to the one below:

| What I already know about the topic | What I am unsure of about the topic | What I hope to learn about the topic |
|---|---|---|
| | | |

***Semantic mapping.*** Students brainstorm about the content of the video by considering the title, a brief introduction to the video, or both. While the students brainstorm aloud, the teacher creates a semantic map on the blackboard or overhead projector that demonstrates how the words the students already know fit into new meaning networks corresponding to the content of the video. The visual imagery inherent in the map illustrates how vocabulary items fit into meaning networks, leading to better vocabulary retention and a better understanding of the video.

For example, to introduce the video *Energy for the Future,* used in conjunction with a thematic unit focusing on changing perceptions of global energy needs, the teacher tells the class that the video is about energy. Students are then asked to hypothesize on the content of the video. As students call out words, the teacher writes them on the board in meaningful groups. When students are finished, the teacher then asks

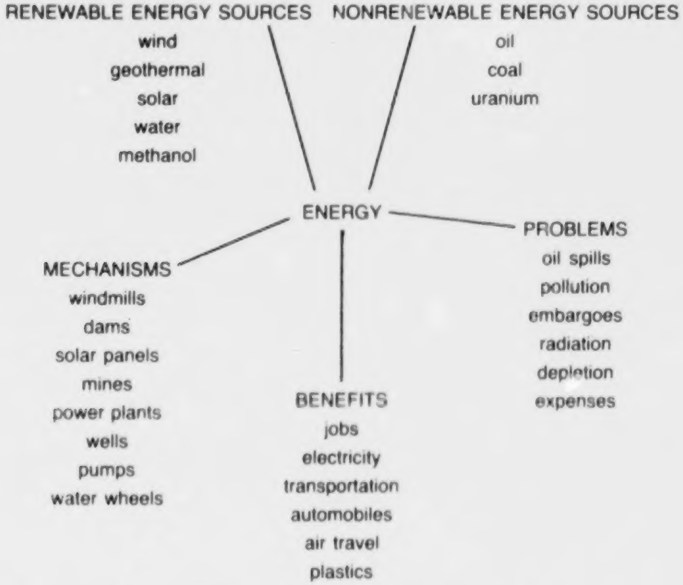
RENEWABLE ENERGY SOURCES
wind
geothermal
solar
water
methanol
NONRENEWABLE ENERGY SOURCES
oil
coal
uranium
ENERGY
MECHANISMS
windmills
dams
solar panels
mines
power plants
wells
pumps
water wheels
BENEFITS
jobs
electricity
transportation
automobiles
air travel
plastics
PROBLEMS
oil spills
pollution
embargoes
radiation
depletion
expenses

**Figure 1.** **Semantic mapping: A tool for illustrating vocabulary networks.**

them to label the groups of words by considering what they have in common (see Figure 1).

***Dictionary consultation.*** Dictionary exercises introduce students to important words and phrases deemed necessary for comprehension. For example, if viewing *U.S.-Soviet Relations: End of the Cold War* in conjunction with a unit on East-West relations, students can look up the following relevant words and phrases: *perestroika, glasnost, cold war, threat, allies, reforms, human rights.* Or, if they are going to see *The American Indian Speaks,* students can look up the term *American Indian* in the dictionary to find other terms used to refer to this ethnic group (such as *Native American, Indian, Amerindian*).

### *Viewing Activities*

Viewing activities primarily facilitate the viewing of a video itself. More specifically, they help students focus on important features of the video or on character or plot development at crucial junctures in the video. Below is a group of activities (by no means exhaustive) for students to complete while seeing a video.

***General listening.*** Students listen for general information considered crucial for comprehension. (See Table 3 and the corresponding discussion.)

***Gathering specific information.*** Students look for information in response to a specified question or issue while viewing the video. For example, while viewing *Fate of the Forests* in conjunction with a thematic unit on ecology, students fill in a grid that answers the question, "Why are the forests of the following countries being destroyed?"

| Kenya | Brazil | the Philippines | Malaysia | Nepal |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | |

(See Tables 1 and 4 and the corresponding discussion for other examples.)

***Video interruptions.*** In this technique the teacher interrupts the video in progress (a) to clarify key points that will help students understand the thematic development of the video, (b) to allow students to tie new knowledge to information introduced in previous thematic unit activities, and (c) to allow students to discuss the content of the film or predict what will happen in the remaining portion(s) of the video.

***Second screening.*** Videos can be shown in their entirety a second time to promote a thorough understanding. However, the length of certain videos and the time needed for purposeful previewing and postviewing activities may make a second screening undesirable. If videos are used primarily as springboards for other classroom activities, pre- and postviewing activities must focus on important aspects of the video (and the thematic unit) rather than demand total comprehension.

### *Postviewing Activities*

Postviewing activities encourage and stimulate (a) the use of newly acquired knowledge stemming from the video, (b) the possible integration of information gained from other thematic unit sources with information from the video, and (c) the use of both written and oral language. The entire class shares the experience of viewing the video, making group and pair work highly effective.

***Class surveys.*** Students interview classmates to determine their peers' reactions to issues raised in the video. As in the previewing activity of the same name, students can be given identical or different survey questions. Students report findings orally, to the entire class or to a small group, and later summarize their findings in a written essay. If possible, the survey questions should be devised so that students integrate information from the video and other theme-based sources, such as readings and lectures.

***Video summaries.*** Alone or in groups, students identify the main points of the video and later summarize them in written or spoken form, or both. (See Williams, 1982, for a detailed description of an "witness activity" requiring students simply to report what they have seen on the screen.)

***Alternate endings.*** Students work together to come up with alternate endings and report them in an oral or written activity. Students can be encouraged to integrate information stemming from other thematic unit activities into their new endings.

***Comparisons.*** Students compare what they knew about the topic of the video before the viewing with what they learned as a result of the viewing. (See the information-gap previewing activity above.)

***Discussion.*** Video-related questions focusing on issues, personal experiences, and cultural observations can stimulate small-group discussion. Similarly, students can examine problems central to the theme of the video or thematic unit; working together, students share insights, propose solutions, and later report them in spoken or written form.

(See Table 1 and the corresponding discussion for sample discussion questions.)

***Agree/disagree/unsure activity.*** Students react individually to a series of statements related to the video. After comparing responses in small groups, students comment in an essay on a statement with which they either strongly agreed or strongly disagreed. If appropriate, students are encouraged to integrate information from the thematic unit into their assignment. (See Table 3 and the corresponding discussion for an example.)

***Ranking/group consensus.*** By ranking various characters or issues in a video by importance, relevance, preference, or desirability, students engage in meaningful conversation while attempting to reach a group consensus. (See Table 4 and the corresponding discussion for an example.)

***Organization in writing.*** A number of exercises help students develop organizational skills for better writing. First, after the teacher elicits the main ideas of the video, students list details that support those issues and then write a paragraph or composition. Alternatively, the teacher cuts printed video summaries into strips, each containing either one sentence or one paragraph of the summary. Students practice organizing paragraphs or parts of paragraphs by assembling the strips into a logical order, thereby reconstructing the video story line. In a third activity, based on a close examination of an introductory paragraph focusing on the important features of the video, students identify ideas to be developed in subsequent paragraphs. If appropriate, students are asked to integrate information presented earlier in the thematic unit into the multiple-paragraph essay.

***Speed writing.*** After an introduction to a topic related to the video, students respond to the topic by writing their impressions quickly in a limited amount of time, without worrying about accuracy.

***Role plays and simulation activities.*** Students can role play characters or a situation from the video while integrating information from other components of the thematic unit. (See Tomalin, 1986, pp. 41–43, for suggestions on setting up a successful role play.)

***Debates.*** Students can hold a debate on an issue raised in the video. (See Table 2 and the corresponding discussion for an example of a debate relating to a video screening.)

## Integrating Previewing, Viewing, and Postviewing Activities

When integrated, the previewing, viewing, and postviewing activities outlined above enhance lessons centered around the screening of a video and the content-based syllabus itself. Only the instructor can choose appropriate activities, mixing and matching them based on the students (e.g., their age, proficiency level, interests, and needs), constraints on the class (e.g., skill focus, objectives, and time available), characteristics of the video itself (e.g., length, degree of difficulty and complexity, availability, and relationship to the thematic unit), and the nature of the thematic unit (e.g., what has already been introduced, what is going to be introduced after the video lesson, and how the content of the video fits into the thematic unit). A video that introduces a thematic unit should highlight and explore different issues than one that closes a unit. At the same time, if the video is shown in the middle of a thematic unit, activities should tap information introduced previously and prepare students for subsequent activities. Video lessons that encourage students to integrate information from a variety of sources and to practice assorted language skills (speaking, listening, reading, and writing) are an ideal preparation for ESL students going into mainstream classrooms.

The lesson plans outlined in Tables 1, 2, 3, and 4 demonstrate different ways of combining previewing, viewing, and postviewing activities. Table 1 presents a lesson plan for the video *Peege*, which describes a family's Christmas visit with grandmother Peege, a patient in a nursing home, who is blind, helpless, and seems to be awaiting death. In flashbacks during the visit, her eldest grandson remembers his grandmother when she was active, adventurous, and outwardly loving. This video easily complements thematic units on aging, multigenerational relationships and responsibilities, and senility, to name a few.

The previewing activity presents students with a problem to solve.

The discussion resulting from the problem resolution helps students articulate their feelings on the matter of caring for senior citizens. The scenario proposed in the table could be simplified or made more complex, yet even with a change in complexity the result would be the same: relevant vocabulary and concepts emerge during the activity that assist students' comprehension when they view *Peege*.

To focus their attention on the differing reactions of the family members, students are asked to consider each character while viewing the video. Posing a question before the video helps students compare and contrast the words and actions of the different characters in the video.

Depending on students' interests and language proficiency levels, and the intended direction of the thematic unit after the screening of *Peege*, one or all of the postviewing activities are appropriate. The first activity, requiring the description of a special elderly person, is most appropriate with low-level students. The third activity, on the other hand, might be more satisfying for high-level students, especially if subsequent thematic unit activities touch upon the role of government in senior citizen care (e.g., health care, social security, and housing).

The lesson plan In Table 2 is designed for the science fiction video *The Ugly Little Boy*, in which a nurse is placed in charge of a child brought back through time from the Neanderthal age by scientists who ignore the human factor while experimenting with the boy. The video easily complements a thematic unit focusing on technological innovations or ethics. In this lesson, students initially survey their peers on issues related to the possibility of humans making contact with beings from outer space, from the past, or from the future. Although the video does not deal with beings from outer space or from the future, it does deal with a time machine designed to bring beings from ancient times into the present. The previewing discussion that accompanies the survey brings issues related to the video to the conscious level.

Because of its unusual story line, *The Ugly Little Boy* easily captivates its audiences. For this reason no specific viewing activities are prescribed. ESL students find the video intriguing and can capture the essence of the video by means of the verbal and nonverbal messages conveyed throughout the video.

The postviewing activities for *The Ugly Little Boy* begin with some general questions that oblige the students to grapple with the motives of the scientists who brought the Neanderthal boy to the present. This

## Table 1. Sample Lesson Plan for *Peege*[a]

### Previewing Activity: Problem Resolution

After completing the following problem resolution activity individually, students discuss their viewpoints.

The Senile Grandfather

John, who is 16 years old, lives with his mother and 79-year-old grandfather. His mother began to work as a waitress 5 years ago, shortly after his father's death. Unfortunately, his father left the family with very little money. His mother earns minimal wages. The three of them live in government housing; a small portion of each of his mother's paychecks is deducted every month to cover the expenses of living in the two-bedroom apartment.

In the past few years John's grandfather has become senile. He laughs and cries without reason. He tells the same stories over and over again. Every year he seems to demand more attention.

John's friends have stopped coming to his house because they feel uncomfortable around his grandfather. John has difficulty studying at home because his grandfather is always distracting him. John's mother is very worried about her father and this has affected her health. All her free time is spent taking care of her father.

What should John and his mother do?

Consider the following solutions to this problem. Circle the solution you think is the best. If you can think of an even better solution, write it down.

a. Send the grandfather to a convalescent home (rest home).
b. Get a separate apartment for the grandfather that is nearby.
c. Make the grandfather stay in his own bedroom.
d. Let the situation continue as it is. Nothing can be done.
e. Bring in a part-time nurse to care for the grandfather.
f. Other ______________________________

*Continued*

Table 1. *Continued*

**Viewing Activity: Specific Information Gathering**

Students consider the following question while watching the film:

Why is it so difficult for the following family members to visit Peege in the nursing home: the mother, the father, and the oldest grandson?

**Postviewing Activity: Discussion**

The instructor selects one or all of the following discussion topics. If the last two are chosen, students should be encouraged to tie in information from previous thematic unit activities.

1. In pairs, students describe an elderly person who has influenced their lives. Later, pairs are merged so that students can "introduce" the person their partner described to them to the new group members.
2. In groups, students discuss the problems associated with senility. What will the students do if their parents become senile?
3. In groups, students discuss the role that government should play in providing care for the elderly.

---

[a] *Peege*, 1974, Santa Monica, CA: Phoenix/BFA Films. Shown in conjunction with a thematic unit on aging.

discussion leads into either a class debate on the ethics of the particular situation portrayed in the video or a discussion of more contemporary, realistic issues involving ethical matters. In both cases, students should be encouraged to use supporting information from other thematic unit activities, if applicable.

The lesson plan in Table 3 accompanies *The Impact of Television*, which illustrates how television affects the behavior of the viewing public. The video can enhance thematic units focusing on media in general or television specifically. In the lesson proposed in the table, much time is devoted to the postviewing activity; therefore, a brainstorming activity, which can be completed in a short time yet maintain its effectiveness, is incorporated as the previewing activity. Capitalizing on the results of the brainstorming session, the viewing activity encourages students to link information from the previewing brainstorming activity with the content of the video.

## Table 2. Sample Lesson Plan for *The Ugly Little Boy*[a]

### Previewing Activity: Class Survey

Students poll a number of other students in class. Each student asks the same set of questions. Upon completion of the survey, students compare findings.

Do you believe that we will make contact with beings from outer space in one hundred years? What about beings from the past or the future?

### Postviewing Activity: Debate or Discussion

In small groups, students review the contents of the video and discuss the following questions. Upon completion of the small group discussions, the instructor sets up either a debate exploring the ethics of the video scenario (A) or a more detailed discussion of related but more contemporary issues (B).

- Why did the scientists bring the Neanderthal boy from the past to the present in the time machine?
- Were the scientists' experiments ethical or unethical?

A. Two new groups are formed for a debate. Group 1 is composed of students who feel they can defend the scientists' work as ethical. Group 2 is composed of students who feel the scientists' work was unethical. The separate groups list reasons for their stand on this ethical question in preparation for a debate.

B. Students form discussion groups to explore the ethics of the situations outlined below. Students are encouraged to bring in relevant information from other thematic unit activities.

- An infant was born with a defective heart. The infant's physician said that the infant would die if her bad heart was not replaced with a new, healthy heart. Consequently, a small monkey was killed so that its heart could be implanted into the infant.
- Millions of dollars have been spent on the development of artificial hearts. These hearts have now been implanted in a number of individuals; the majority of these individuals have died. Those that have survived are experiencing both minor and major complications.

*Continued*

**Table 2.** ***Continued***

- Thousands of dogs are used each year in medical experiments. Dogs are used in experiments that try to determine the effectiveness of new drugs. In addition, the dogs are sometimes injected with certain diseases so that doctors and scientists can study the symptoms of these diseases.
- Many children are born with defective internal organs (e.g., hearts, kidneys, or eyes). Many of these children are on "waiting lists" for organ donations. Often donations come from car accident victims; the good organs of these car accident victims are used to replace defective organs in living beings.

[a]*The Ugly Little Boy*, 1977, Deerfield, IL: Learning Corporation of America. Shown in conjunction with a thematic unit on technological innovations or ethics.

After discussing general reactions to the video and possible additions to students' brainstorming lists, students complete the postviewing agree/disagree/unsure activity individually. Students discuss their answers in groups, select one statement about which they feel strongly, and respond to it in writing. If the video screening falls in the middle or toward the end of the thematic unit, students are encouraged to integrate information from other unit activities into their essays.

The lesson plan in Table 4 complements *Getting Married*, a video that examines the many ways American choose to marry. Although dated, the video is effective in a unit comparing life-styles of the past with those of the present. The class survey suggested in the lesson plan differs from the survey proposed in Table 2 in that students receive different questions. Interviewing several classmates exposes students to a variety of viewpoints on the same issue. In addition, as a result of being interviewed by others and having to respond to new questions from each, students encounter a range of related but diverse issues. In the process vocabulary and issues that are likely to surface in the video arise.

The viewing activity requires students to listen for specific information while viewing the video, a directed listening activity that helps students follow the video more closely and gather the most pertinent information in the video. The postviewing activity, a ranking/group consensus activity, obliges students to consider 10 statements about

**Table 3. Sample Lesson Plan for *The Impact of Television*[a]**

**Previewing Activity: Brainstorming**

Working in groups, students consider the following questions. One student, selected to serve as "secretary," records the group's quick responses. Before viewing the video, groups' lists are compared.

- How did people spend their leisure time before television?
- How has television changed people's lives? Consider both positive and negative changes.

**Viewing Activity: General Listening**

While watching the video, students listen for additional positive and negative changes (not mentioned during the previewing session) that have resulted from television viewing.

**Postviewing Activity: Agree/Disagree/Unsure**

After the instructor elicits general reactions to the video and discussion of additional positive and negative changes resulting from watching television, students complete the agree/disagree/unsure exercise individually. In groups, students then discuss their answers. If all students in the group have responded in the same manner, they try to determine if they did so for the same reasons. If there is any disagreement, students attempt to understand each group member's point of view. After group discussion, students select a statement with which they strongly agreed or strongly disagreed and comment on it in an essay. If this activity falls somewhere in the middle or toward the end of a thematic unit, students are encouraged to integrate information from other thematic unit activities into their discussions and essays.

*Continued*

**Table 3.** ***Continued***

Consider the following statements. Do you agree (A) or disagree (D) with these statements? Or are you unsure (U)?

1. _____ Television is a wonderful educational tool.
2. _____ Watching TV is a waste of time.
3. _____ Selective TV watching is important.
4. _____ TV's are good baby sitters.
5. _____ People read less because of television.
6. _____ Television programs paint a realistic picture of the world.
7. _____ Television news keeps people well informed about world events.
8. _____ Television commercials keep businesses going.
9. _____ Children should be limited to 1 hour of television per day.
10. _____ Adults should be limited to 2 hours of television per night.
11. _____ Educational TV programs should be broadcast on all channels.
12. _____ Noneducational programs should be prohibited.
13. _____ TV helps people relax after a hard day at work.
14. _____ Watching English language TV programs helps nonnative speakers of English improve their listening skills and vocabulary.
15. _____ U.S. television programs teach a lot about the culture of the USA.

[a] *The Impact of Television*, 1980, Lake Orion, MI: Britannica Educational Corp., Britannica Films. Shown as part of a thematic unit on media.

marriage and rate them from most to least reasonable. After completing the exercise individually, students attempt to reach a group consensus. Students are encouraged to defend their own positions by using information from the video and from thematic unit materials introduced previously.

## Conclusion

This chapter shows how to connect the curricular objectives of theme-based syllabi with the practical applications of videos in that context.

### Table 4. Sample Lesson Plan for *Getting Married*

**Previewing Activity: Class Survey**

Each student is given one of the questions listed below. Students interview and compile responses from their classmates. At the end of the survey, students share their findings with the class.

- What roles should a husband and a wife play in a successful marriage?
- What are some good reasons for getting married?
- What are the advantages of staying single?
- What are the characteristics of a successful marriage?
- What are the characteristics of an unsuccessful marriage?
- Why do you think the divorce rate is so high in the United States?
- How have marriages changed in the past 50 years?
- Do you think marriages are most likely to last between people who are similar in age? Ethnic and racial background? Why? Why not?
- Do you think marriages are most likely to last between people with the same level of education? Of the same social class? Of the same religion? Why? Why not?
- Should a bride and groom write out a contractual agreement before getting married? Why? Why not?
- What do you think are the most difficult things to cope with in marriage?
- What do you think is the ideal age for marriage? Explain.
- What are the benefits and potential problems of a cross-cultural marriage?

**Viewing Activity: Specific Information Gathering**

Students are asked to consider the following questions while viewing the film:

Three types of marriages are described in the video. What are they? How are they similar? How are they different?

*Continued*

## Table 4. *Continued*

### Postviewing Activity: Ranking/Group Consensus

Students consider the following statements individually and rate them from most to least reasonable. Then groups of students attempt to reach a group consensus, each student defending his or her own ratings in the process of discussion and negotiation. Students are encouraged to make use of information from the video as well as from other thematic unit activities during the discussion.

Consider the list below, which includes reasons people get married. Rank these reasons from most reasonable (1) to least reasonable (10).

_____ Romance (dreamy ideas about love)
_____ Companionship (to have someone to be with; to have a friend)
_____ Social pressure (influence from society)
_____ Sexual attraction (to be attracted to someone for sexual reasons)
_____ Children (to have and bring up children)
_____ Religion (religious belief that marriage is important)
_____ Money (financial security)
_____ Security (to be provided for)
_____ Pregnancy (because of pregnancy before marriage)
_____ Comfort (to have someone who will take care of you, cook, sew, earn money for you)

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[a] *Getting Married*, 1976, Santa Monica, CA: Pyramid BFA/Films. Shown in conjunction with a thematic unit on changing life-styles.

Videos can introduce or provide interesting closure to thematic units or augment a thematic unit in progress. Instructors can maximize the benefits of video by integrating previewing, viewing, and postviewing activities into their lesson plans. The communicative activities proposed here encourage natural language use and language skill development in addition to enhancing theme-based curricular units.

The lesson plans outlined here advocate the use of videos ranging in length from 17 to 28 minutes, lengths that have proven appropriate for students enrolled in courses in English for academic purposes with class sessions lasting approximately 100 minutes. The ideal length of classroom videos, however, has been the subject of much discussion and lively debate among proponents of video use in ESL classrooms. (See McKnight cited in MacWilliam, 1986; Willis, 1983a; and Kerridge, 1982, for differing viewpoints.)

Whether instructors choose to use short or long videotapes, videos can be effective instructional tools if instructors keep one crucial issue in mind. Modern audiovisual technology (i.e., videos, films, and television) can easily master its viewers by "stimulating" passive, mindless involvement. To take the greatest advantage of the benefits of videos in the ESL classroom, teachers must promote active viewing. Teachers can make the most of the medium and prevent students from becoming passive and uncritical viewers, like viewers of television, by using videos as springboards for communicative activities and the development of thematic units (Willis, 1983a).

## Note

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# 3

# TEACHING YOUNG CHILDREN WITH VIDEO

*Barry Tomalin*, **BBC English**

Our world, in urban societies at least, is becoming more internationally aware. Parents feel a need to make children aware of foreign languages at an increasingly early age both at home and at school. The importance of English in world communication means that, apart from local languages children need to know for immediate communication, learning English is the first priority.

The demand for English instruction geared toward young learners at home and in elementary school is on the rise, especially in Europe with the advent of the 1992 single market. In Greece, for example, middle-class parents begin to teach their children English at home to give them an advantage in primary school. In France, an experiment started in 1988 introduced "another European language" in primary school in three departments (administrative provinces). Not surprisingly, the language most departments opted for was English, and a year later almost all the French departments had joined the experiment. The recent great changes in the political structure of Central and Eastern Europe have been accompanied by a demand for English to improve communication with the outside world. In Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and the countries of the former Soviet Union, a television program for teaching English to children, "Muzzy in Gondoland," is on the air.

English for children, then, is an established priority. What is the role of television and radio in teaching English to children?

## What Children Can Learn From Television and Video

Traditionally, television learning is a one-time viewing activity supported by an activity book. In contrast, video offers the advantage of repeatability, an important attribute for teaching children, who, once they like something, are capable of watching it 100 times without boredom. The penetration of language transmitted on video is therefore extremely high. Children learn by absorption and imitation.

Video offers a number of other special advantages in the teaching of children. First, it is visual and highly motivating. One of the aims of teaching English to young children is to instill in them the idea that language learning is a happy experience, and video creates an attractive, enjoyable learning environment.

Second, video offers shows the language *in use*. Unlike a picture book, video allows children to learn not only how speakers are dressed and what their environment is but how people move as they speak, how others react to what they say, and so on. Learning is easier for the child because the more complete visual context presented by video supplies additional clues to meaning.

Third, video offers the child an opportunity to absorb the culture of the target language community by seeing the daily life, dress, and customs that lie behind the language transactions presented. Video is one of the most successful ways of bringing the target language into the classroom.

Teachers who choose to use video or television with young children are faced with a challenge: the passivity of the medium, which is an attitudinal problem for parents, pupils, and some teachers. A not uncommon criticism of video in the classroom is, "My children watch television for 4 hours at home each day. Why should they be forced to watch it at school?" Video and television are perceived as ways of relaxing and turning off the mind, not as ways of learning and engaging the mind.

This final argument cuts two ways. On the one hand, some parents and teachers believe school should be a television-free zone. The counterargument is as follows: "Television is an established part of our culture. Only in 'neolithic' schools do students not have access to it." These attitudinal factors, combined with the technological facility of the teacher and financial and logistical considerations, determine whether video is used as a teaching aid in working with young children. I believe that video has an important role in teaching children, although I am conscious of a parallel and separate strand of teaching via approaches—such as the Silent Way, Total Physical Response, and Suggestopaedia—that do not require any technology apart from the occasional use of a cassette recorder to play music.

The benefits of using video with children can be summarized as follows:

- Children enjoy language learning with video.
- Video communicates meaning better than other media.
- Video is an effective way to study body language.
- Children gain confidence through repetition and imitation.
- Video leads to an awareness of the culture of English-speaking countries.
- Video represents a positive exploitation of technology.
- Video serves as a takeoff point for varied activities.

Used in the right way in the classroom—to promote intellectual activity among children—video has beneficial effects that are transferred to the use of television and video at home.

## The Selection of Classroom Video

Two features dominate the criteria for selecting video materials for children: watchability and completeness. First, although other educational materials are evaluated in terms of their pedagogical value alone, television and video programs need to be assessed from the standpoint of their entertainment value as well. If video does not motivate, it will not be successful. Second, the video extract must make sense; it must be complete in itself. Among teachers using video with university-level and adult students, there is a trend toward developing "information gap" activities in which the video content is fragmented by manipulation of the output (see Stempleski's chapter in this volume), by suppressing sound, vision, or color, for example. Such activities can be used to stimulate language production at a later stage in the lesson, but children want to be able to see and understand what is going on first. The ideal video clip is between 30 seconds and 4 minutes long and tells a complete story or section of a story.

Another key point in selecting video for children is to be sure that the materials do not run ahead of the children's level of maturity or language mastery in their native language. Materials that work particularly well are carefully designed cartoons, in which the language and the visual input are controlled to make them totally relevant to both the communication of meaning and the maturity level of young learners.

## The Philosophy of Lesson Planning With Video

Video plays two roles in a language classroom: extensive and intensive. In its extensive use, video is a means of relaxation or a reward for successful work at the end of the day. In its intensive use, video becomes an integral part of the lesson and often serves as its takeoff point. Children are encouraged to understand and to join the story by acting it out or imitating the characters, making the video an entry point into an English-speaking world.

In primary school English as a foreign language (EFL) classrooms, the emphasis is on "doing things in English," rather than on "learning English in order to do things." Video becomes the point of departure for a whole series of classroom activities. In watching the video with children, the teacher's job is threefold:

1. to help the children be aware of the situation: "What's happening?"
2. to increase the children's awareness of the language used: "What are the characters saying?"
3. to find ways for the children to use the language on the video in other situations: "How can I use it?"

In carrying out these three tasks, the teacher can take advantage of communicative classroom organizational strategies by breaking activities up into short sections, changing activities every 10 minutes or so, and involving the children's own world, including both their fantasy world (often articulated through cartoons) and their mundane world—

themselves, their families, their school, and the world outside. For example, children can follow up a viewing of a cartoon segment from "Sesame Street" or an episode from "Muzzy in Gondoland" with a discussion comparing the families presented on the cartoon with their own families.

## Planning Lessons With Video for Children

A basic approach to using video with children is the concept of "doing things in English for no particular reason"—for example, playing games based on the video. The secret to success is to make each activity focus on a slightly different aspect of the video. Asking the children to look for something different each time keeps their interest high. In successive viewings children can concentrate on imitating characters, listening for particular words, or looking for different items. In this way the teacher gradually builds up the child's knowledge of the language presented on the video.

If the video selected is commercial rather than produced for English as a second language (ESL) or EFL classes, teachers should select beforehand the particular language they want to highlight. Two types of language are taught in the classroom: the language used on the video itself and the language produced by the children in response to what they see on the video. The teacher has control over the selection and presentation of the first type, but the second type of language is less predictable. Video encourages self-expression, and the teacher needs to be sensitive and prepared to help the children find what they want to say and to enable them to say it.

### *Stage 1: Active Viewing*

The teacher's first task is to establish that the children can understand the content of the video and to overcome passivity in viewing. Active viewing tasks encourage the children to interact with the video right from the start. Prediction tasks are a good way of preparing children for viewing and of preteaching key vocabulary items. For example, the teacher can introduce six new words and ask the children which ones they see or hear on the video. When the video is played, the children watch or listen for the words. After the viewing, the children say what words they "saw" or heard. A benefit of this activity is that, while children are watching and listening for the new words, they are also absorbing the content of the video.

Another prediction task is for the children to imagine what the story is about. The teacher begins by offering the class a few key words from which the children predict the story they will see on the video. Then the children watch the video and see if their predictions were correct.

True-and-false games are enjoyable active viewing tasks for children in the upper elementary grades. First, the teacher summarizes the story in five or six sentences. The children then watch the video and decide which sentences in the summary are true and which are false. Active viewing activities such as these prepare the children to understand the content of the video.

### *Stage 2: Teaching Language*

Once the children understand the content of the video, they are ready for the language it contains. A number of video-based activities can be used to teach and reinforce grammatical structures and vocabulary. As stated above, video is a visual medium judged by entertainment standards, and new structures and new phrases are similarly made memorable by a visual presentation. For example, a finger puppet appearing from behind a flip chart, above a table, or around a door can explain new grammar. The puppet, perhaps made by the children, might represent one of the video characters.

Another way to focus on language is to draw one or two characters on the board with speech bubbles over their heads. The children watch a scene twice and write in the bubbles what the characters said.

By remembering the importance of focusing on a different type of information with each viewing, the teacher can change the children's perspective each time they watch. The teacher says, "Watch [Character A]. What does she say?" The children watch and imitate. Then the teacher explains what the character says and perfects the children's pronunciation. The teacher then moves on to another character. "Now watch [Character B]. What does he say?" The teacher explains what character B says. Then the children—working in pairs, chains, or groups—practice the language used by the characters.

The video can be used successfully as a vocabulary field. For example, the teacher can press the pause button on the video player to freeze a video frame and then teach related vocabulary items. The children draw the scene on the blackboard and label the key vocabulary items to the right of the drawing. With the television turned off, the teacher covers the words on the right and points to the pictures. The children say the words. As a variation, the teacher can freeze a picture, release, and refreeze it a few seconds later with the scene slightly changed. The children's task is to say what is different.

Color words can be successfully taught with video by assigning each child a different color. The children watch the video clip and look for something green, something blue, and so on. Each child might be told, "Raise your hand when you see your color." The same procedure works with names of objects shown on the video—for example, "chair," "spoon," "monster," and so on.

## *Stage 3: Transferring the Language*

This stage of the lesson aims to exploit and reinforce the language taught through the video and help the children transfer the language practiced within the context of the video to their own situation.

To exploit the language on the video, "acting out" is an obvious activity. One child mimes an action or a word, and another child must guess what is being mimed. A variation of the activity is to have the second child ask a question based on the action being mimed. A third child must answer the question. For example, Child A mimes stealing an apple. Child B then asks, "What did she steal?" Child C answers, "An apple."

In another activity, children watch a scene and act it out in their own words, but with the eye contact, body movements, and gestures used by the characters on the video. A useful instruction here is for the teacher to say something like, "Remember the hands. Remember the eyes." Children can also watch a scene, construct paper cutouts of the characters, and use them to act out the scene.

To reinforce vocabulary, such activities as "guess the word" and "hangman" are effective. One child writes down a word from the video and mimes the word. Another must guess what the word is. Alternatively, the teacher can write dialogues with some words missing. The children watch the video and spot the missing words. Children can also draw characters and then find words to describe them. One group can describe the clothes of the character, another the facial characteristics, and another the personality attributes.

To reinforce structures, the teacher can write a dialogue on the blackboard. The children practice reading the dialogue, and lines or phrases of the dialogue are gradually erased until the children can say the entire dialogue from memory.

Other activities can focus on sentence structure. In one such activity, the teacher writes a sentence from the video on the blackboard—with no word boundaries. The children watch the video and then draw lines at the word boundaries. An example is the following sentence from "Muzzy in Gondoland": WHEREDOYOUCOMEFROM? Or the teacher can write a sentence with too many words. The children's task is to listen to the video and draw lines through the extra words. Another activity focusing on sentence structure is to assign each child a word and have the children physically arrange themselves to make a complete correct sentence from the video.

To practice writing skills, the children can write the sequel to a story or write each other letters about the story. For example, a child might write something like the following:

Dear Janine,
Muzzy likes clocks. Do you like clocks?
Love,
Marc

The letters are passed around the class, and then the children write and deliver their replies. When carrying out this activity the teacher should prepare extra letters for children who receive no deliveries!

The class can generate group compositions about the video. One child writes a sentence about the video and folds over the paper to cover it. The paper is passed to the next child, who writes a line, folds the paper over, and passes it on. The game continues until the class has finished. Then the compositions are read out and discussed.

Other writing activities based on the video include having the children write diaries in English about what they have seen or discussed in class and making picture dictionaries of new words they have learned.

Finally, the children can use the video as a takeoff point to discuss their own worlds, their families, and the world outside. For example, the teacher can encourage discussion by saying something like, "Bob and Sylvia have a daughter. Her name's Amanda. Have you got a sister? What's her name?" and so on.

## Conclusion

The value of using video for teaching children is primarily motivational. Video stimulates children to acquire new words and phrases as well as learn about the target culture, and provides the child with constantly renewed input in the target language. By changing the children's perspective and asking them to seek different information from the video each time it is played, the teacher can ensure that the children are never bored. Passivity becomes activity when the teacher has the children interact with the video or uses the medium as a springboard for other activities. The children are not just learning English; they are "doing things in English" and having fun at the same time—the best way of all to learn.

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# 4

# USING VIDEO TO TEACH COMMUNICATIVE ENGLISH TO STUDENTS OF INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS

*Ulla Ladau-Harjulin,* **Swedish School of Economics and Business Administration**

At the Swedish School of Economics in Helsinki, Finland, the students, whose mother tongues are Finnish or Swedish, have studied English for about 8 years at school. Most continue studying English as a supplement to their main study of economics at the university level because many intend to pursue a career in the world of international business. A challenge for English teachers is to improve the students' oral communicative skills in a way that is motivating, stimulating, and rewarding; to design courses relevant to the students' future jobs; and to incorporate entertaining elements into their program.

For the Finnish generation that has grown up with English or American television programs, the answer to this challenge is video. Many of the English language teaching (ELT) business dramas and non-ELT managerial training films on the market today are suitable for these students, and many excellent handbooks detail ways to make video work in the classroom. Sometimes, however, teachers may have to resort to designing their own materials to accompany the video. Doing so allows teachers to concentrate on items they want to highlight and develop further in accordance with their own circumstances, teaching preferences, and aims.

In this chapter I describe materials (Ladau-Harjulin & Morgan, 1986) designed to be used in conjunction with a 13-episode BBC video serial called *Bid for Power: English for Commerce and Industry*. Similar material can be designed for any video drama at the intermediate and advanced levels of language instruction.

## The *Bid for Power* Serial

*Bid for Power* is a business drama about international companies competing for a large project to exploit a newly discovered natural resource in Tanaku, an imaginary country seeking opportunities for development. The serial offers excellent models for learners of English in various social and business situations in the world of international business.

Jack Lonergan (1984) writes, "The outstanding feature of video films is their ability to present complete communicative situations" (p. 4). Video makes tangible the combined effect of verbal, nonverbal, and contextual information, but the multidimensional information flashes across the screen and is received passively as vague impressions or pure entertainment unless it is captured in some way.

Viewing guides (Ladau-Harjulin & Morgan, 1986) (as defined by Lonergan [1984]), written for every scene in *Bid for Power,* enable the students to focus on one aspect, or step by step on several aspects, of the information on the screen. The guides take the form of note-taking grids, viewing-for-gist grids, register and style grids, opinion-building grids and questions, grids and questions on kinesics and proxemics, and other activities that integrate the video directly into language teaching.

The overall aim of the materials is to involve students actively in the events of the story and draw on their experience and knowledge of the world, triggering analyses, comments, speculation, and discussion. Specifically, the materials were written with the following goals:

1. to highlight the language functions portrayed in *Bid for Power,* guiding the students toward a correct interpretation of the interactions between the characters in the video and toward the production of appropriate language in specific situations
2. to increase the students' awareness of the cross-cultural dimension within the world of international business
3. to invite the students to interpret nonverbal signals and their contribution to communication
4. to encourage the students to discover how language, behavior,

strategy, and tactics, as well as differences in cultural background, can affect success in various business activities.

In a business drama like *Bid for Power*, the verbal, nonverbal, and situational aspects of the communicative act often involve features such as the different cultural backgrounds of the participants and the business skills they employ. All aspects are intertwined and, in a way, are interdependent and inseparable in the final analysis of the communicative act (see Figure 1). Although I stress this interrelatedness to my students, for pedagogical reasons the material often focuses on one or a few aspects. The video makes students aware of features whose importance to communication is more difficult to demonstrate in class by using more traditional language teaching methods.

The viewing material, which accompanies the video in chronological order, is used scene by scene. The students do not see the episode as a whole in advance; the material is aimed partly at increasing tension as the plot unfolds. The examples described here are chosen from different sections of the material to illustrate some of the aims listed above. I ask readers to take a leap of the imagination as the materials are described, especially in regard to audiovisual features of the serial.

## Language Functions

The viewing guides designed to teach language functions have a twofold aim: (a) to increase the students' awareness of verbal, nonverbal, and contextual information in a scene (What is the *real* message of a particular scene?) and (b) to emphasize that the students themselves must observe verbal, nonverbal, and contextual features when producing appropriate language for a specific situation. The unique advantage of video is that the topic, the setting, and social roles (such as age, sex, and status), along with the attitudes and moods of the participants, are directly available on the screen for each communicative situation.

### *Example 1: Focus on Intonation and Behavior*

English intonation, especially when it indicates different attitudes, is an area of great difficulty for Finns, as it is for students of many other nationalities. In Example 1, David Rose (DR), a young American executive, arranges an "accidental" meeting with Christine Walker (CW), a

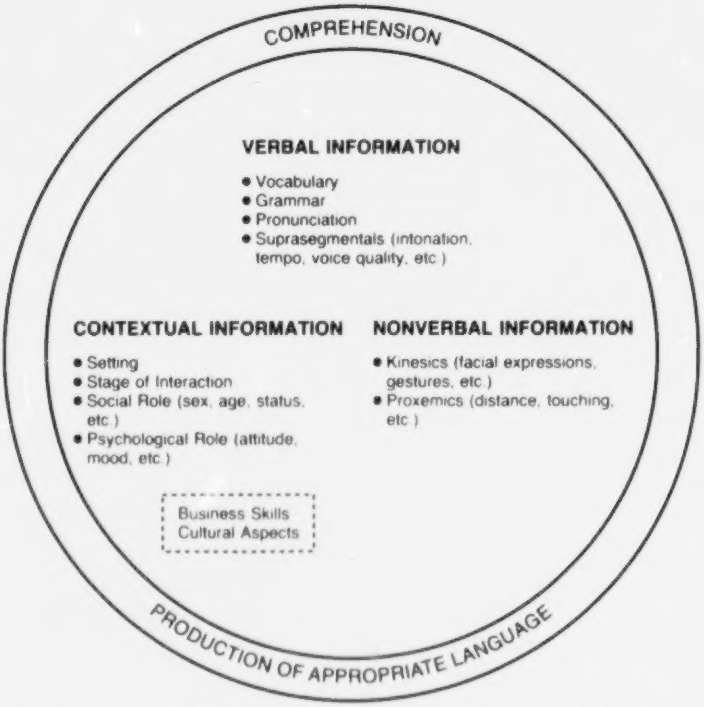

COMPREHENSION
VERBAL INFORMATION
• Vocabulary
• Grammar
• Pronunciation
• Suprasegmentals (intonation, tempo, voice quality, etc.)
CONTEXTUAL INFORMATION
• Setting
• Stage of Interaction
• Social Role (sex, age, status, etc.)
• Psychological Role (attitude, mood, etc.)
NONVERBAL INFORMATION
• Kinesics (facial expressions, gestures, etc.)
• Proxemics (distance, touching, etc.)
Business Skills
Cultural Aspects
PRODUCTION OF APPROPRIATE LANGUAGE

Figure 1. Social and business situations in *Bid for Power* as multidimensional communicative acts.

British scientist, at a tourist site in Tanaku to get information about a rumored silicon project in which his company would be interested.

DR: Excuse me! Sorry!
CW: It's quite all right.
DR: Can you use a camera? I want to take a picture of myself in front of these guns. To take back home.
CW: You want me to take a picture of you?
DR: That's right. If you don't mind, thank you. It's very simple. You focus it here, you press this—
CW: Yes. Yes, I know. I've got a camera just like this.
DR: OK.
CW: Ready?

DR: OK?
CW: Not really. There's no film in it.
DR: Oh! How strange! Er—
CW: Yes?
DR: I'm on vacation on my own, and I want someone to talk to. I'm David Rose, by the way.
CW: Oh, yes?

Applying a technique called *video-split,* I first play the sound only, asking the students to interpret Christine Walker's attitudes with the help of the grid below. Quite a few students think that Christine is politely encouraging David Rose. Only when they see the combined effect of sound and picture do they understand Christine's message at the end: "Get lost!"

1. Listen to Christine Walker without looking at the screen (sound only). Indicate your interpretation on the grid below.
2. Play the scene again, this time watching Christine Walker (sound and picture). Indicate your interpretation.

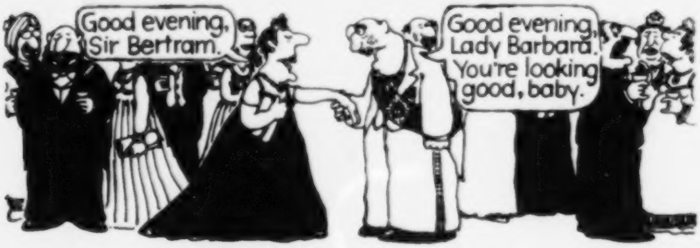
| | pleasure | amusement | surprise | curiosity | indifference | boredom | annoyance | anger |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| It's quite all right. | | | | | | | | |
| You want me to take a picture of you? | | | | | | | | |
| Yes. Yes, I know. I've got a camera just like this. | | | | | | | | |
| Not really. There's no film in it. | | | | | | | | |
| Yes! | | | | | | | | |
| Oh, yes? | | | | | | | | |

What sort of message is Christine Walker's intonation conveying to David Rose?

Let us say that Christine Walker is quite overwhelmed by David Rose's many charms. How would she sound now?

### Appropriate Language Production

Students may find it easy to recognize grammatical errors once their attention has been brought to them, but even advanced students have difficulty mastering the different styles and registers of the target language. Nonnative speakers of English occasionally sound like Lady Barbara and Sir Bertram in the following cartoon:


Good evening, Sir Bertram.
Good evening, Lady Barbara. You're looking good, baby.

Reprinted from S. Blundell, J. Higgins, and N. Middlemiss (1982), *Functions in English* (Oxford University Press), p. 196, with permission.

The video, which illustrates complete communicative situations, helps the students practice saying the right thing at the right time. For example, knowing how to greet and introduce people appropriately is a useful social and business skill. Owing to different rituals of both language and behavior in different cultures, these functions may be more difficult to perform correctly than one might expect. For instance, in Finland people introduce themselves in most situations without the help of a third person. The Finnish language contains no equivalent to the phrase "How do you do?", and a question such as "How are you?" is often regarded as redundant after a simple greeting. Extended greeting rituals in the American fashion may be interpreted by Finns as intrusive or insincere. Finnish students therefore need extensive practice before they can perform the introductions elegantly and naturally in English.

### Example 2: Focus on the Degree of Formality

In Example 2, Christine Walker (CW) and her friend Ramilla Silva (RS) meet Ramilla's husband, Manuel (MS), and her uncle, Dr. Azevedo (DrA), who is also the director of the National Development Agency in Tanaku. The scene takes place on the terrace of the Silva family's beach house in Tanaku.

On register grids like the one below, students note whether the utterances are more formal than, as formal as, or less formal than those used by the characters in the video. They discuss why some of them are inappropriate in this situation and what else they could say.

*Introducing Someone*

RS: Uncle, this is my friend, Christine Walker from England.

Are these utterances

| | more formal? | as formal? | less formal? |
|---|---|---|---|
| Have you met Christine Walker? | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) |
| May I introduce Dr. Walker? | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) |
| Uncle, meet Christine. | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) |

What else might Ramilla Silva have said?

*Answering an Introduction*

CW: How do you do . . . ?

DrA: How do you do . . . ?

Are these utterances

| | more formal? | as formal? | less formal? |
|---|---|---|---|
| Hello! | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) |
| I'm delighted to meet you. | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) |
| Pleased to meet you. | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) |
| I'm delighted to make your acquaintance. | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) |

Think of a situation when "How do you do?" would not be suitable.

### *Example 3: Focus on Nonverbal and Situational Features*

The same scene can be used to analyze the characters' behavior: when to shake hands, when to kiss, at what distance to remain from each other, and so on.

In your country, would Christine Walker's kissing Manuel Silva be considered

odd? ( )
reprehensible? ( )
acceptable? ( )

About 50% of the students usually find the little kiss with which Christine Walker greets Manuel Silva quite acceptable whereas the other half regard it as rather odd. In this respect students focus on a possible cultural difference between Finland and Tanaku, England, France, and the United States. In some countries such a greeting might not be acceptable at all. Spontaneous discussion follows based on the experience of the students.

The class can also focus on etiquette: why, in this scene, Christine Walker is introduced to Dr. Azevedo rather than vice versa, the gentleman to the lady. Students can then tell what they know about the order of introductions in social situations or in business hierarchies in different cultures.

### *Example 4: Focus on Predicting Appropriate Utterances*

The class can easily move from the exercises in Examples 2 and 3 into cue drills, role plays, or simulations involving greetings and introductions. In addition, the video allows further reinforcement in saying and doing the right thing at the right time. The next time a greeting or an introduction appears in the story, students can predict what the characters will say and do. In Example 4 the students are asked to produce an utterance that will fit a particular context. The video provides necessary information on the setting and the relationship and attitudes of the participants, as well as background knowledge.

Christine Walker arrives at the National Development Agency in Tanaku and is received by Dr. Azevedo and Manuel Silva. Dr. Azevedo then introduces her to Edward Ferguson, an agent of a Japanese company called Pansil.

As the teacher freezes the picture just before Dr. Azevedo speaks, the students suggest utterances to fit the situation. The teacher then plays Dr. Azevedo's utterance for comparison and freezes the picture again before Edward Ferguson's reply. Similarly, students predict Christine Walker's response.

Dr. Azevedo: ____________________
Edward Ferguson: ____________________
Christine Walker: ____________________

### *Example 5: Focus on Setting*

The teacher can also draw the students' attention to the way Dr. Azevedo addresses Christine Walker at the beginning of the scene ("Miss Walker, you are very welcome") as well as to the fact that, because they are in a formal office setting, this time Christine Walker and Manuel Silva do not kiss.

### *Example 6: Focus on Forms of Address*

The students are bewildered by the different ways superiors and subordinates address each other throughout the story. Bosses in Tanaku or San Francisco call their secretaries "Bettina" or "Nancy," but the secretaries address their bosses as "Mr. Silva" or "Mr. Faulkner." Christine Walker greets an office clerk in London with "Hello, Paul!" and receives the answer, "Good morning, Dr. Walker." In another scene, however, boss and secretary address each other in terms of equal formality: "Mr. Ferguson" and "Mrs. Juma." Teachers ask the students whether, in Finland, whatever the difference in sex, age, or status, they would address each other either with second-person singular plus first names or with second-person plural plus surnames prefaced by professional or academic titles. In fact, Finns are very keen on these epithets. Furthermore, there is no direct equivalent to the word "sir" in the Finnish language, which makes its use by a Finn very difficult.

*Manuel Silva (MS), Bettina Lama (BL), Dr. Azevedo (DrA)*

MS: Thank you, Bettina. Have a good weekend.
BL: Goodbye, Mr. Silva.
DrA: Goodbye, Bettina.
BL: Goodby, Sir.

What do these forms of address reveal about the relationships between Dr. Azevedo, Manuel Silva, and Bettina Lama?

Below an American and a German executive of equal status address each other in a different way.

*Harry Faulkner (HF), Erich Schlesinger (ES)*

HF: Well, that brings us to draft clause Number 27.

ES: Yes. The exclusivity clause.

HF: That presents no difficulties, I believe, Erich.

ES: On the contrary, Mr. Faulkner. EAU objects to it strongly. Dr. Lehner made that clear to Mr. Rose a month ago.

HF: Well. David did mention that EAU likes to be free to choose its own partners, but I—

ES: In fact, it is the policy of my company not to accept exclusivity clauses like this.

Why do you think Erich Schlesinger calls Harry Faulkner "Mr. Faulkner," and Harry Faulkner calls Erich Schlesinger "Erich"?

Finnish students are unlikely to use either form within a similar dialogue in this manner ("Erich" or "Mr. Faulkner") because of the influence of their native language. The frequent use of someone's name is not considered especially polite or friendly in the Finnish culture. With the help of the video, the students can be guided toward an awareness of the complexity in this area.

## The Cross-Cultural Dimension

A business drama like *Bid for Power* lends itself easily to contrasts and comparisons among the international characters in the story. The class may concentrate on their language and behavior or observe and discuss concepts the characters introduce (for example, honor, modesty, face). All the events in the video can be compared with those in the learners' own culture, so that students learn about their own cultural backgrounds in addition to gaining an understanding of other nationalities' ways and values. A highly rewarding approach is to concentrate on areas in which communication barriers may arise because of the different cultural backgrounds of the model speakers and the learners. The video often demonstrates such situations, alerting the students to potential communication traps.

### *Example 7: Focus on Style and Register*

In Example 7 students compare and contrast the giving and acceptance of invitations in various situations. In Situation A, Makoto Hosokawa

(MH), from Japan, invites a British consultant, James Clarke (JC), at Clarke's office, to visit his company's silicon processing plant in Tokyo. In Situation B, David Rose (DR) invites Christine Walker (CW) to his company's factory in San Francisco. The latter invitation takes place at a restaurant over an aperitif.

Account for the difference in register of these two situations:

*Situation A*

MH: By the way, you should see our manufacturing process. Pansil would be pleased to welcome both of you at our silicon plant in Japan.

JC: That's very kind of you.

MH: I should also like to welcome Mr. Silva, so that he can see it, too.

JC: I'm sure he'd be delighted.

*Situation B*

DR: That reminds me, have you ever been to California?

CW: No.

DR: Well. It's famous for sunshine, the Golden Gate Bridge and Faulkner Enterprises. Come and see it for yourself.

CW: The Golden Gate Bridge?

DR: No. Our factory, where we make arc furnaces and other silicon processing equipment.

CW: Is this an invitation?

DR: Yeah. And bring James Clarke with you. And Silva from Tanaku.

CW: I think they'd like that.

DR: Good.

### *Example 8: Focus on the Role of Women in Business*

Among the many differences (Japanese-British versus American-British, formal versus informal, business acquaintances versus business friends, and so on) apparent in the video, the students notice the vibrations of slight flirtation between David Rose and Christine Walker in Example 7. Together with the fuss about who is to pay, the scene can serve as a basis for discussion about the role of women in business and about the great cross-cultural differences in the area. Sometimes quite heated debates follow.

CW: David, before we eat—I must insist that I pay for my own meal tonight.
DR: Pay? But I asked you here.
CW: I'm sorry, but because of my position I simply can't allow you to pay for me.
DR: No Christine—
CW: Either you agree, or I leave.
DR: OK. If you say so. Well, I hope you had a better meeting than I did today. . . .

Christine Walker insists on paying for her own meal in order to:

( ) preserve her reputation.
( ) salve her conscience.
( ) make sure no one casts doubt on her professional integrity.

In some cultures, do businessmen speak or behave differently in the presence of female counterparts? Are there any advantages or disadvantages to being or dealing with a woman in business?

### *Example 9: Focus on Relationships*

In the following scene the viewer meets Harry Faulkner (HF) and David Rose (DR) of Faulkner Enterprises, San Francisco, for the first time. The grid focuses on the relationship between the two men.

The relationship between Harry Faulkner and David Rose is:

( ) that of friends.
( ) that of friendly colleagues or associates.
( ) that of superior and subordinate.

How do you know?

At the first viewing many students are diverted by the informal "Californian" atmosphere of the office, with Harry Faulkner's smiling face, the casual greetings, and the men's joking way of speaking. Only when they are asked to listen carefully to the dialogue do they notice that Harry Faulkner and David Rose are not just friends; Harry Faulkner is in a position to compliment David Rose on work well done and to give him orders.

*Situation A*

Congratulating and Responding

HF: You did a nice job in Argentina last month. Congratulations. You handled things very smoothly.

DR: Thanks.

Giving and Receiving an Order

DR: What's the project?

HF: I didn't get all the details, but it looks like a big one, David. It includes a silicon processing plant.

DR: You want me to find out all about it?

HF: Right!

*or*

HF: Clarke is going to Tanaku Monday morning. You're going to be there when he arrives, David.

Students can compare Situation A with Situation B, in which Edward Ferguson (EF) receives congratulations and orders from his Japanese boss, Akiro Watanabe (AW). Finnish students do not feel at home here either because they see the formal language Edward Ferguson uses in his replies as too deferential.

*Situation B*

Congratulating and Responding

AW: You've been very successful.

EF: Well, I've done my best to promote Pansil and its products.

Giving and Receiving an Order

AW: Now, I would like you to find out if anyone in Tanaku has been responsible for the rumor.

EF: Mr. Watanabe, I can assure you I will do my best to find out.

### *Example 10: Focus on the Concept of Honor*

Mr. Watanabe's introduction of the concept of honor together with the grid below stimulates a vivid discussion about its importance in Japan and in other parts of the world. The grid introduces some cross-cultural comparison within the framework of the story. The students know all the characters mentioned in the grid. They represent six nationalities, they belong to different age groups, and one is female—Akiro Watanabe, Japan (AW); Manuel Silva, Tanaku (MS); David Rose, United States (DR); Christine Walker, Great Britain (CW); Gerhard Lehner, Germany (GL); and Michel Leclerc, France (ML).

> On the basis of character, age, sex, and cultural background, indicate which individuals might use the following expressions. Discuss your choice.
>
> | | AW | MS | DR | CW | GL | ML |
> |---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
> | This reflects upon my honor. | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) |
> | Are you casting doubts on my professional integrity? | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) |
> | This affects my reputation. | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) |
>
> In a similar situation, would a Finnish businessperson be likely to use the first utterance above? Would it be natural for a Finnish businesswoman to refer to her "reputation" in this context?

### *Example 11: Focus on Small Talk*

Finns tolerate silences in conversation far better than most other Europeans (Lehtonen & Sajavaara, 1985). In fact, they often find it embarrassing to talk about trivialities with people they do not know well. In spite of this characteristic, future Finnish "captains of industry" need to know that in the Anglo-Saxon culture, for instance, long pauses in the conversation may break the rules of politeness in certain circumstances. Video dramas normally contain excellent conversational items that students can analyze and use as models to increase their social and communicative skills in small talk.

In the following dialogue Christine Walker (CW) has just been introduced to Dr. Azevedo (DrA).

> DrA: . . . Is this your first visit to Tanaku?
> CW: Yes. And I'm enjoying it very much. It's a beautiful country.
> DrA: Yes, it is beautiful. How long are you staying?
> CW: Only till Monday, I'm afraid.

DrA: Oh, what a pity!
CW: Well, all good things must come to an end.

What is the function of this conversation?

Inventing suitable topics for small talk, and learning when to introduce them and how long to pursue them, are possible follow-up exercises.

### *Example 12: Focus on Listener Feedback*

Because of their cultural patterns, Finnish businesspersons sometimes appear silent in situations in which Anglo-Saxons expect some kind of "polite noises." To avoid appearing unresponsive, the students can practice inserting short utterances into suitable places with the help of model dialogues on screen and grids similar to the one below. The students are urged to pay special attention to their intonation and accompanying body language.

*Showing You Are Listening*

Manuel Silva: Exactly!

Which of the following utterances might Manuel Silva have used instead?

Tell me more. ( )
Aha. ( )
Mmm . . . ( )
Fancy that! ( )
Well, well! ( )
No! ( )
Oh? ( )
Indeed? ( )
Indeed! ( )
Just so! ( )

Many Finnish businesspersons think it rude to interrupt someone who seems not to have finished his or her say in a conversation, and they would rather remain respectfully silent until it is clearly their turn to speak. In an extreme case they may never have a turn (nor the ensuing contract)!

## The Nonverbal Dimension

Video has revolutionized communicative language teaching methods by making the communicative situation both visual and audible. The characters' appearances as well as their facial expressions and body movements contribute greatly to communication, and they offer a wide range of possibilities for cross-cultural comparison.

### *Example 13: Analyzing Body Language*

Finns are considered quite silent in their body language. Example 13 contains a detailed analysis of the body language in a scene in which David Rose (DR) pays a surprise visit to the Southampton Research Institute to see Christine Walker (CW). David Rose also meets a senior colleague of Christine's, Professor Bill Hardacre (BH).

In Example 13 students interpret the facial expressions and bodily movements of the characters. Apart from being enjoyable, the activity helps students to understand the meaning of certain gestures, which are not always as obvious to them as to representatives of some other cultures.

In the third column write your interpretation of the facial gestures and body movements of the characters.

BH: Ah, Christine! There's a friend of yours to see you.
CW: David!
DR: Hi there!
CW: What on earth brings you here?

| | | | Your interpretation |
|---|---|---|---|
| DR: | I'm on my way | (puts head on | ____________ |
| | back to the States. | one side) | |
| | I had to stop off | | ____________ |
| | in London, so I | (shrugs) | |
| | hired a car. Here | | |
| | I am and I wanted | (nods) | ____________ |
| | to let you know how | | |
| | things were going. | | |

Notice that some gestures replace dialogue. In the third column suggest utterances that might fit the gesture.

BH: Splendid! Look! I'm off now. Why don't you both come to my place for tea?

| | | Suggested Utterances |
|---|---|---|
| CW | shakes head | ________________ |
| BH | raises eyebrows | ________________ |
| DR | turns to CW | ________________ |
| | smiles | ________________ |
| CW | sets face | ________________ |
| | smiles | ________________ |

## Business Skills and Practices

For students with no experience in actual business life, a business drama or managerial film offers a glimpse of skills and practices necessary for their future work. *Bid for Power* offers a wide range of models to observe and analyze, from using the telephone, to meeting techniques, to negotiation skills and the concept of business ethics.

### *Example 14: Focus on Negotiation*

Example 14 highlights several aspects of the information available to analyze Edward Ferguson's performance as a negotiator and to conclude how a successful negotiator is expected to speak and act. The scene, which lasts for about 2½ minutes on screen, results in several hours of language practice. (Appendix 4A contains a tapescript of the scene.) The grids below apply to the first part of the dialogue.

The first step is to look more closely at Edward Ferguson's offer with the help of a viewing guide focusing on how advantageous his offer would be for the National Development Agency in Tanaku.

Is Edward Ferguson's offer advantageous to Pansil or the National Development Agency (NDA)?

| Pansil | NDA | |
|---|---|---|
| (   ) | (   ) | It demands exclusivity. |
| (   ) | (   ) | It is long term. |
| (   ) | (   ) | It gives Pansil an option to renew the agreement after 20 years. |
| (   ) | (   ) | Pansil is not prepared to sign a contract but wants a Letter of Intent promising the exclusive rights to buy the sand. |

(   )   (   )   No other group can match Pansil's resources in the field of silicon-based products.

(   )   (   )   Pansil has a large demand for quartz as a raw material for their silicon-based products.

Next the passage is divided into various stages and the students concentrate on the tactics employed in each stage, such as ***stating and clarifying positions*** and ***making moves, countermoves, and evasions***. The students than take notes to fill in the language that supports each tactic, paying special attention to the language of persuasion. A scene involving the concept of ***hard sell*** is illustrated below.

*Hard Sell*

EF: My clients tell me that ____________________________
you can obtain. It is a ________________ ____________ realistic offer. May I also remind you that ______________________
the resources of Pansil in this particular field. They make silicon-based products. They need a ________________ of quartz. This means ______________________________.

*Evasion*

DrA: ____________________________________________ Mr. Ferguson.
______________________ we are waiting for an expert adviser to arrive. Unfortunately her plane is late. ______________

In Stage 3, Stepping Up the Hard Sell, the language functions of *agreeing, disagreeing,* and *partially agreeing* are of special interest, as they are in any scene involving negotiations. Students focus on how far a negotiator can go before arriving at a deadlock. Through repeated viewing the students start paying attention to the combined effect of verbal language and body language on the messages conveyed by the participants and on how well the characters themselves observe certain gestural or bodily hints.

The class can further analyze the characters' behavior with the help of grids similar to the one below, which focuses on the gradual change in Edward Ferguson's performance. At first he is cool, well behaved, and matter-of-fact, but after Christine Walker, whose report he has stolen, joins the negotiating party, he becomes irritated and nervous, starts losing control, loses face, and finally forgets even the basic rules of common politeness when leaving the room.

| Does Edward Ferguson appear: | Stage 1 | Stage 2 | Stage 3 |
|---|---|---|---|
| matter-of-fact? | (  ) | (  ) | (  ) |
| polite? | (  ) | (  ) | (  ) |
| controlled? | (  ) | (  ) | (  ) |
| sincere? | (  ) | (  ) | (  ) |
| convincing? | (  ) | (  ) | (  ) |
| enthusiastic? | (  ) | (  ) | (  ) |
| agitated? | (  ) | (  ) | (  ) |

Your suggestion:

---

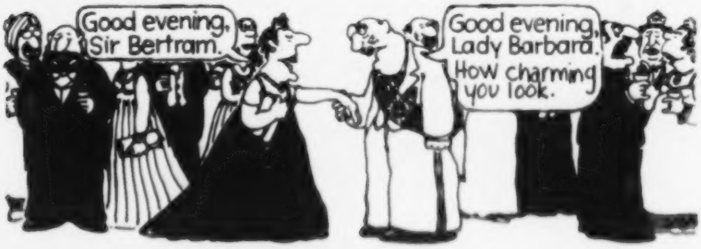
Politeness together with a certain amount of *savoir faire* and sophistication is often the basis for successful business communication. However, polite aims may not always happily "translate" into a foreign language because the concepts of politeness, modesty, and tact may be expressed differently in different cultures (Leech, 1983).

## Conclusion

Some international businesspersons may say that a language teacher cannot teach years of experience. With the video, the teacher can at least help the students take a shortcut to proficiency in business practices by increasing their awareness of a highly complicated and interesting area.

Working with a medium so full of potential as the video is a process of discovery and challenge for both students and teachers. For students of international business, a business drama or a managerial training film increases sensitivity toward and awareness of any aspect of language on which the teacher chooses to focus. In addition, practicing oral communicative skills through the interaction between the teacher, the student, and the video is highly enjoyable and rewarding.

The "interactive" nature of the video serves as a stimulating starting point for bridges to additional linguistic activities that the students can use in their own reality:


Good evening, Sir Bertram.
Good evening, Lady Barbara. How charming you look.

Adapted from S. Blundell, J. Higgins, and N. Middlemiss (1982), *Functions in English* (Oxford University Press), p. 196, with permission.

But do we really know what Sir Bertram means? We cannot hear him; we cannot see his facial expressions. The dimension of video is missing.

## References

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### *Videotape*

*Bid for power: English for commerce and industry.* (1981). London: BBC English by Television.

## Appendix 4A: Tapescript for *Bid for Power,* Episode 2, Latter Part

Edward Ferguson (EF), Dr. Azevedo (DrA), Manuel Silva (MS), Christine Walker (CW).

EF: As you can see, gentlemen, my clients are making a very good offer.

DrA: Come now, Mr. Ferguson. We are all realists. Your clients are making an offer, yes, but in return they want exclusive rights to buy our sand for a period of twenty years.

EF: With an option to renew the agreement. Yes, that's right.

MS: Is Pansil ready to sign a contract on the basis of your report?

EF: Well, no. All they want at the moment is a letter of intent, promising the rights.

MS: Perhaps we can get a better offer from Europe or the United States, Mr. Ferguson.

EF: My clients tell me that this offer is the best you can obtain. It is a very, very realistic offer. May I remind you that no other group can match the resources of Pansil in this particular field? They make a great many silicon-based products. They need a great deal of quartz. That means more money for Tanaku.

DrA: What you say is very interesting, Mr. Ferguson, but we are waiting for an expert adviser to arrive. Unfortunately, her plane is late. Can we perhaps adjourn the discussion until tomorrow?

EF: Dr. Azevedo, my clients are asking for an early reply. They are looking at other beaches. Surely the matter is very simple? You have quartz sand to sell. My clients wish to buy it, at a fair price. What is there to discuss?

DrA: Excuse me. Yes. . . . Thank you. Our expert is here now, Mr. Ferguson. Do you mind if she joins us?

EF: Not at all.

DrA: Show her in, please.

DrA: Miss Walker! Or rather, Dr. Walker! You're very welcome.

CW: I'm sorry I'm late. The plane . . .

DrA: Never mind. You're just in time.

MS: Hello, Christine. Welcome back.

CW: Hello, Manuel.

DrA: May I introduce Mr. Ferguson, of the Tanaku United Commercial Agency. Dr. Christine Walker, of the Hampton Research Institute.

EF: I'm delighted to meet you, Dr. Walker.

CW: How do you do, Mr. Ferguson?

DrA: Would you like some coffee?

CW: Oh yes, please. That would be lovely.

Of course, I'm a scientist, not a businessperson. But I can give you my immediate reaction to this offer from Pansil if you wish. If you are going to sell the sand in an unprocessed state, the offer is probably very fair.

EF: So you can accept it, Dr. Azevedo.

CW: I'm not saying that, Mr. Ferguson. On the contrary, I advise Dr. Azevedo to refuse it.

EF: What! May I remind you, Dr. Walker—

CW: I'm sorry, Mr. Ferguson, but that is my advice. I have a different proposal to discuss with Dr. Azevedo and Mr. Silva.

EF: A different proposal? But what else can Tanaku do but sell its sand?

DrA: Mr. Ferguson, can we meet again in a day or two? I'm sure you understand.

EF: Very well. You have our offer, Dr. Azevedo. You know my clients hope to have an early reply.

DrA: Of course. Goodbye, Mr. Ferguson. Thank you very much.

MS: Well, Christine, what is it? Your coffee—black or white?

## 5

# SHOOTING YOUR CLASS: THE VIDEODRAMA APPROACH TO LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

*Tracey Forrest,* Baruch College, City University of New York

Over the past half century, the gradual but persistent shift from audiolingual techniques toward communicative approaches to language teaching has nurtured a kind of tug-of-war in the minds of teachers. On one side is an emphasis on the structural aspects of language; on the other, a focus on its communicative nature. Many English language teachers and materials writers have sided with one or the other camp, developing and using techniques and texts focusing on either the forms or the functions of the language. In both cases, opportunities for students to develop self-monitoring strategies and an awareness of their own idiolects fade away in the shadow of language-centered curricula, which do not help students develop into good language learners. Awareness of both form and function is, of course, crucial in the acquisition of a second language, and neither should be favored in the classroom at the expense of the other. The best choice is a strategies-driven curriculum (motivated by the *process* of communicating) rather than a language-based one (motivated by language-specific facts). Such a curriculum links form and function and gives students a context for developing their individual language-learning strategies and personal styles of communication.

The key components in communicative language tasks lie as well at the heart of dramatic language-learning activities such as role playing and improvisation: information known by some but not all students, a choice of what language to use and how to use it, and opportunities for students to respond and react to each other. Additionally, drama adds immediacy to conversations and dialogues and takes into account the fact that words represent not only events but the intents, beliefs, and perspectives of the speakers toward those events. These unobservable meanings can best be extracted through firsthand experience.

Dramatic methodologies can provide a format for natural language use (even in the context of the language classroom), but students still have to sacrifice opportunities to reflect on, modify, and correct their language in the interest of spontaneity and natural conversation. To heighten the level of engagement for students, teachers have had to succumb to the fleeting nature of the language produced in the course of dramatic language tasks. The elements of real-life conversations stunningly represented in dramatic activities—repetitions, interruptions, hesitations, distractions, changes of topic, facial expressions, gestures, sounds, personal grammars, and idiolects—have been lost to memory when the activity ends. With the advent of the portable video recorder, which is increasingly available in educational settings, teachers can preserve actual language production for students to scrutinize by mastering a few simple operating basics.

The ideal situation, then, is the most dramatic context possible *and* a way of capturing the linguistic and paralinguistic by-products of the activities so that students can analyze and evaluate their own performances. One technique containing these elements is Videodrama, a strategies-based approach to language acquisition and language instruction that combines highly contextualized dramatic language activities and videotaped records of student work. It provides learning formats aimed at maximizing oral/aural competency as well as opportunities for students to monitor and improve their individual language output and communicative styles—reasons enough for shooting your class.

## Improvisation

> We learn through experience and experiencing. . . . If the environment permits it, anyone can learn whatever he chooses to learn . . . it is in the increasing of the individual capacity for experiencing that the untold potentiality of a personality can be evoked. (Spolin, 1983, p. 3)

The techniques of Videodrama may be used with an array of dramatic and communicative language activities; they are discussed here in light of one such activity, improvisation.

The process described here is meant for intermediate to advanced learners. Teachers should modify the basic techniques and steps to suit the language level of each particular class. (See Table 1 for an outline of the steps in an improvisation.) For example, a preliminary task to improvising is to set up a framework of facts for the scene—to decide the place and time of the drama and the relationships among the participants. For beginning students, the time, place, and roles should appear relevant, and the objectives in the scene should be clear and easily obtainable. More subtle facts can be added to the framework as students increase their ability in the language and become more adept improvisers.

## Preparation

Improvisation is organized around a general framework of imagined facts, based on a particular scene, within which students interact and communicate spontaneously. The success of an improvisation as a communicative format for language learning depends somewhat on the teacher's success in guiding students to prepare a comprehensible structure for the improvisation.

Before improvising, students may work in pairs and small groups to specify the framework. All students should be involved in preliminary activities; even students who are not going to improvise should work on the structure of the improvisation. The teacher may give students suggestions for several scenes and possible objectives on small index cards as a starting point. Although students may ignore them in favor of their own ideas, discussion of the suggestions will start the ball rolling. Improvisations (and linguistically unstructured language activities in general) may fall flat if students are not focused—if the scene contains no meaning for them and therefore no communicative intent. Students who are clear about the facts of the scene and goals of the characters have a common frame of reference and specific reasons to communicate.

During the preparation phase the teacher should visit each pair or group, helping students to decide on and to clarify the following elements, encouraging them to make clear, concise statements of the con-

## Table 1. Steps in an Improvisation

**1. Warm Up**

- Divide the class into small groups to describe an event in their lives when they had to solve a problem or ask someone for help. They should tell exactly what the problem was and how they resolved it.
- Introduce a sample scene and ask the groups to fill in who the characters in the scene might be, how they might feel about each other, and what problem they might have to resolve. Ask groups to share their results with one another.
- For beginners, use simple role plays. Intermediate and advanced learners can be given a list of the elements of improvisation to consult.

**2. Select Participants**

- In small groups, students decide on the number of people in the improvisation and select the players.
- Through discussion, students determine the improvisational framework.

**3. Set the Stage**

- Actors and group members define the playing space, using simple props and furniture. Interactants agree on the layout of the physical space.
- The camera operator positions the camera to have a wide range of view of the complete set.

**4. Prepare Observers**

- The teacher assigns observation tasks.

**5. Enact the Improvisation**

**6. View the Videotape**

- Students and teacher evaluate and discuss the improvisation.

**7. Reenact**

- Students enact revised roles.
- Students enact alternative approaches and behaviors.
- Students change players.

**8. View the Videotape**

- Students and teacher evaluate and discuss the improvisation.
- The teacher summarizes the improvisation and generalizes about the students' performance.

**9. Follow Up With Spinoff Activities (see Table 2)**

text, and making sure that everyone involved understands and agrees to the facts:

1. Scene (when and where): time and place of the action; for example, *Student A's office, 3:00 p.m. on Friday.*
2. Relationship (who): the identity of the other person(s) in the scene; for example, *Student A, president of a computer software company,* and *Student B, creator of an amazing new computer software package.*
3. Background (a recent event shared by the characters); for example, *Student B gave Student A a detailed design proposal for a new software package to critique 2 weeks ago.*

Because students share facts only about scene, relationship, and background, information gaps are inherent in the improvisational framework. With the collaboration of other class members, each interactant decides on his or her own point of view about the scene, independent activities, and individual objectives:

4. Point of view (how): how I feel about the other person(s) and about what is taking place; for example, *Student A: I have not developed any successful computer programs in a long time; my company is failing. I'm jealous of B. I sold Student B's ideas under my own name to save my company and my reputation, and I have no intention of sharing either the money or the glory with B.*

   *Student B: I respect A. I have always heard that he is helpful to struggling young software designers. I'm grateful that A has taken an interest in me.*
5. Independent activity (what): What I am doing when the scene begins and why (tasks that participants are engaged in when the scene begins but that are not directly to the improvisation); for example, *Student A: I am just about to leave my office to go to the lawyer's office to sign a contract for B's software design. Student B: An important manufacturer has agreed to look at my design. I go to tell A.*
6. Objective (why): what I want or need from the other person(s) and why; for example, *Student A: To get rid of B so I can leave my office and sign the contract. Student B: To get my design proposal back.*

The goal of preparation, then, is to determine a basic set of clear facts on which students will be able to build by exercising a wide range of linguistic choices. Preparation helps students comprehend questions that come up in the unpredictable language arising from spontaneous interaction, and students who understand the situation will find the linguistic input they receive during the improvisation easier to understand. Good preparation ensures that both interactants and observers are fully engaged in the activity.

Preparation may take anywhere from 5 minutes to half an hour depending on the level of complexity and the degree of student involvement during the discussions. Generally, preparation takes longer than the performance; students may discuss and set up the improvisation in groups for half an hour and improvise for 5 minutes. Five minutes of videotaped interaction often provides material for hours of follow-up review and instruction. Furthermore, the preparation phase of improvisation is itself a communicative activity and an excellent time for the camera operator to practice.

In defining the framework of the improvisation, teachers should encourage students to suggest and discuss relevant themes—topics of personal interest—which enhances their motivation and involvement. Teachers may give suggestions for scenes (time and place of the action) on small index cards as a jumping-off point for working out the other facts. Suggesting locations (such as *an airport, a restaurant, a park*) and possible objectives (such as *buy a ticket, borrow $10, sell your wristwatch*) can help students expand their horizons beyond the constraints of their current circumstances.

### *Performance*

Improvisational structures are determined by class members working in small groups, but not everyone will be improvising at the same time. In fact, two-person improvisations, which demand the most language production in the shortest periods of time, are typically more productive than improvisations in which there are several interactants.

An important difference between a dramatic moment and a nondramatic one is its intensity. Videodrama presupposes a high degree of involvement all around. The participation of an audience and the presence of the video camera promise a heightened level of engagement. Audience members, having participated in the preparation, have a vested interest in the enactment. Teachers should assign audience members observation tasks such as the following:

- Make a general outline of the course of action of the scene. (For example, the teacher might note that "the president of the company became rude, and then the designer got angry, and then . . . , and then . . . , and then . . . .")
- Note facts in the story that are not clear. (For example, did the actors stick to the point, or did they bring in information that had little to do with the story?)
- Note places where the scene is not true to the facts decided in the preparation. (For example, Student A represents himself as someone other than the president of the company.)
- Note the central conflict or problem in the scene. (For example, was it clear that Student A wanted to get rid of Student B and that Student B wanted his design proposal returned? What language and gestures did the actors use to get their points across?)
- Note language-specific questions or errors, such as mistakes in grammar, vocabulary use, or pronunciation.

Observers may check their notes as they watch the videotape and share their ideas with the interactants and each other during feedback sessions.

An important factor in successful improvisation is continuous action. Teacher-directors should share the responsibility of moving the scene along by prompting interactants to add focus and immediacy to the scene when they become distracted. If the interaction comes to a stop, the teacher can suggest an action or a type of eye contact to help students regain their connection. Another way to help the students return to the scene is to whisper a suggestion for a specific verbal or physical move. By side coaching—moving in and out of the scene at appropriate places—the teacher-director can help students use the activity as a basis for developing and refining their language skills. Attention to the following four areas will help students achieve the communicative goals of the activity:

1. *Environment:* creating a nonjudgmental, nonauthoritarian atmosphere in which all students are encouraged to become involved in the activity.

2. *Side coaching:* helping interactants back on the track by making suggestions for physical or linguistic actions. For example, if the software designer digresses, the teacher might quietly whisper in his ear, "Ask for what you *really* want."
3. *Timing:* giving a sense of immediacy to the scene during lags. For example, if students reach a block or tend to ramble, the teacher can bring them back to the point by saying, "You have only 2 minutes to get what you want." It is surprising how time constraints help students to regain their focus.
4. *Evaluation:* reflecting on what has taken place for clarification and insight. When students are evaluating their work, the teacher can assist them by pointing to specific behaviors and language for them to consider. For example, the teacher might say to one interactant, "When you did that, what did your partner do?" or "How do you think your partner felt when you said ______?" "How did you feel at that point?" and "How did your partner/you express her/your feelings?" "Did what you said/did help you get what you wanted?"

## Videotaping

Because teachers are involved with interactants during the performance phase as well as during the other steps in the improvisation, one or two student volunteers should record the improvisation. The teacher can arrange a class session in which a member of the audiovisual department briefs all students on the fundamentals of operating the school's video camera, and students can take turns videotaping. When there is no one to explain the rudiments of videotaping, the information in the instruction manuals that accompany the video camera together with trial and error usually suffice for making a beginning. Even young children can learn to handle a video camera with minimal guidance. With respect to camera work, there is no substitute for experience. (See Appendix 5A for tips on videotaping.)

## Evaluation and Feedback

Reflection is a vital component of Videodrama. It emphasizes the importance of nonverbal communication and encourages students to self-correct and experiment with alternative language behaviors. By studying themselves in context, students can bring to consciousness the effectiveness of their personal linguistic and communication styles, knowledge that enhances further learning. The videotape promotes good language learning strategies. It is supremely motivational for students to step back and see themselves in action. They become eager to engage in creative problem-solving language tasks that grow out of the improvisational-evaluative experience, such as explaining their intentions and interpreting the behaviors of others. As students gain insight into their behavior, confidence develops; they take more risks and become willing to take responsibility for their own learning.

Spontaneous interaction in the classroom yields a range of unpredictable verbal and nonverbal behaviors that, because of their elusive nature, often escape the scrutiny of students and teachers alike. In a classroom improvisation, the speed of the activity and the limited recall capabilities of participants and observers result in evaluation sessions that often do little more than focus on gross errors or miscommunications. The richness of personal strategies (what actors said or did to make their point or achieve their objectives) and contextual meanings (how certain behaviors may have affected the interaction) is lost.

Using video as the recordkeeper of performances allows students and teachers to study, analyze, evaluate, and discuss an exact reproduction of the activity with all its nuances and complexities. Participants become their own observers as they watch an exact replication of the event.

Videodrama enables students to take advantage of the contextual nature of communicative exercises and to learn through self-monitoring and feedback from peers. Students watching their own performances may comment, "Oh, I didn't mean that. I wanted to say . . ." and (to a partner) "I didn't tell you the answer because I didn't like that you were so loud." A student who self-corrects during natural conversation is employing the editing function of an internal monitoring system. Students are not usually swift in self-correcting, and most are somewhat aware that attention to form slows down the interaction and may impede communication. In contrast, after hearing a misuse of a present tense verb on videotape, a student may go through a self-monitoring process that would not have been attempted in the normal course of conversation. For example, a students who hears, "Yesterday I bring home the tickets," may self-correct herself as follows: "Yesterday I bringed . . . [pause] . . . branged . . . [pause] . . . brought . . . home the tickets."

After an improvisation, the following activities help interactants and observers review and reflect as they watch the videotape:

- describe the interaction
- summarize the interaction
- interpret the interaction
- explain actions and intentions
- help each other clarify questions about events
- discuss the effectiveness, appropriateness, and correctness of their expression
- exchange notes on how they might better have achieved objectives or communicated effectively
- form opinions on the strengths and weaknesses of the activity
- discuss and correct or change features of language
- offer constructive criticism
- decide on more interesting approaches to the conflict or problem,
- do the improvisation again (or have others do it), and compare the two. (See Table 2 for more spinoff activities.)

After the videotaping, teachers can help students gain insight into their performance by

- posing thought-provoking questions
- suggesting interpretations of meaning
- correcting and clarifying
- offering alternative behaviors and solutions
- pointing out linguistic and paralinguistic elements important to the communication
- using the videotape as a guide in selecting specific exercises for the benefit of the class. (See Table 3 for a list of areas to evaluate.)

## Conclusion

Videodrama sets the tone for students to express their thoughts and feelings and test out hypotheses they are formulating about the target language. They engage in creative, spontaneous problem-solving tasks, use interlanguage grammars and lexicons, develop self-monitoring skills, expand their verbal and behavioral repertoires, experiment with

**Table 2. Spinoff Activities**

**Oral Summaries**

Students summarize the enactment aloud to the class based on a review of the videotape.

**Language Journals**

Students evaluate their language development and use continuously by writing in a notebook aspects of grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation that they notice as they study themselves on videotape. They may share their journals with the teacher regularly; teachers may use the journals as the basis for teacher-student conferences and as a way of monitoring the student's progress.

**Monologues**

Students prepare short (2- to 5-minute) personal statements, narratives, or opinions based on a main idea in an enactment or on another subject. The monologues can be videotaped and reviewed with the teacher.

**Interviews**

Students interview each other on specified topics and use the videotaped recording as a basis for self-study.

**Paired and Small-Group Dialogue Writing**

Students develop and write dialogues based on the enactments.

**Script Writing**

Students develop and write a script—with stage directions—based on an enactment. They may perform their skit as a short play or formal reading and videotape their performance as the basis for further language work.

**Theme Discussion and Writing**

In groups, students generalize and state opinions on a theme or moral or social issue derived from an enactment and discussed during the evaluation. They develop expository writings, opinion essays, or editorials based on the themes.

### Table 3. Teacher's Evaluation Checklist

**Focus on Content**

- Was the framework of the interaction clear to the students?
- Were the objectives of the activity clear to students?
- Did the actors stick to the issue?
- Did the actors solve the problem or conflict?

**Focus on Strategies**

- Were the students (actors *and* observers) involved in the interaction?
- Was the concentration complete? Did the actors' minds wander? Was there eye contact?
- Did the actors communicate? Did the action flow freely?
- Were enactments interpreted, discussed, and analyzed?
- Were alternative behaviors and language suggested and tried?
- Did the teacher side coach at appropriate points?
- Did the students generalize about the meanings, feelings, and actions in the scene?

**Focus on Language**

- Did the teacher point out specific language errors, including incorrect grammar, poor pronunciation, misuses of language, and inappropriate behaviors?
- Did students note corrections and changes in incorrect or inappropriate language forms?
- Did students discuss or experiment with alternative ways of trying to attain their stated objectives?

alternative communicative approaches in specific contexts, and shape and refine their personal styles of communication. As students become accustomed to viewing and evaluating themselves and their colleagues, they will begin to become autonomous language learners.

Videodrama is a methodological approach, the basic techniques of which may be applied to even the simplest classroom interaction. A complex improvisation like the one discussed here is not suitable for a beginning-level class or a group of young learners, but the two fundamental elements—a dramatic context and a videotaped record—apply to any level and any age group, from simple role plays or monologues for beginners to "let's pretend" activities for young children. In any form, Videodrama expands the scope of language-based activities by including opportunities for firsthand examination and revision of the linguistic and paralinguistic by-products of these activities, elements that elude students in the normal course of the process.

## Reference

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## Appendix 5A: Videotaping Basics

Video production units are fast becoming staple hardware in many school systems. The most popular equipment is the portable, single-camera video production system, the basic components of which are the camera, microphone, video cassette recorder (VCR), display monitor, and power source. No matter the format or particular brand of equipment, the basic operating procedures are the same. The following tips and reminders can help teachers get started in classroom video production.

### *Steps in Setting Up the Camera*

The most flexible and convenient arrangement for a portable camera is on a tripod with wheels. This setup allows the camera to be repositioned easily and ensures smoother filming than is possible with a hand-held camera.

Although portable cameras have built-in microphones, it is advisable to place an external microphone on the set for activities in which students move about, such as improvisations.

After plugging cables into the power source:

- Set the camera's power switch to the ON position; look for the indicator light.
- Put the CAMERA/PLAYBACK switch to CAMERA.
- Set the EJECT button, insert the video cassette, and close the cassette door.

- Put your eye to the camera viewfinder and select something on which to focus. Adjust the eyepiece for your vision and the camera height for your stature.
- Put the camera in PAUSE mode until you begin recording; when you are ready to record, release the PAUSE button.

### Trouble Checks

- *No power* (indicator light will not come on). If you are using a battery, recharge it. If you have the camera plugged into a wall outlet, check that the socket is working.
- *Won't record.* Is there a cassette in the camera? Eject it and reinsert it.

  Is the video cassette broken? Try another cassette.

  Is the safety tab removed from the cassette? Try a new cassette.

  Is the camera switch in PLAYBACK position? Set it to CAMERA.
- *Poor picture quality during recording.* If the picture looks too dark in the viewfinder, add light to the scene.

### Recording Tips

- Before recording, zoom in on the subject or scene, adjust the FOCUS buttons, and then zoom back to the desired angle of view.
- Keep the focus window clean and unobstructed.
- Avoid taping subjects and scenes with bright light *behind* them.
- Be aware of video and audio backgrounds. Background visual details and sounds clutter the picture and detract from the sounds. *Don't bump or tap the microphone.*
- Don't move the camera rapidly from side to side or jerk it. Use a steady, gradual "pan" for clarity.
- Keep the camera level while taping; continually check this through the viewfinder.

### Tape Tips

- Don't try to use a damaged video cassette or one exposed to moisture.
- Break the safety tab on cassettes after recording to safeguard them from accidental erasure.
- Label video cassettes before storing them.
- Store video cassettes in dry tape boxes.

# 6

# USING A VIDEO CAMERA TO EVALUATE LEARNERS' CLASSROOM PERFORMANCE

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Many teachers successfully use a video camera for a variety of purposes in language teaching and learning. First, they may encourage their students to use English as the medium of communication in carrying out video projects. With the help of colleagues, teachers may also use a camera to create new materials that meet the specific needs of their students. Alternatively, the camera can be used to record and evaluate the performance of teacher trainees—and the students' reactions to them. In this chapter I examine a fourth way to use a video camera: the evaluation of students' communicative performance.

Feedback and evaluation sessions with students can be the most fruitful aspect of working with a video camera. Two main issues in evaluating their performance are (a) what should be evaluated and how the evaluation should be carried out, and (b) what the roles of the teacher, the learner, and rest of the class should be during an evaluation session. In general, to encourage the students' self-confidence and esteem for their peers, teachers should play back the recorded performance to the class as soon as practicable; evaluate the performance in an atmosphere of empathy, trust, and confidence; and ask all participants to be constructive in their criticism.

## What Can Be Evaluated?

There are two main approaches to evaluating the performance of learners on video. One is to listen to the language and, while the speakers talk (or the videotape plays), to note the participants' errors in and correct uses of language. This approach draws heavily on contrastive analysis and error analysis of the language used. That is, the teacher takes note of the language in terms of the speakers' problems with interference from their native language or their ability (or inability) to cope with the systems of English.

In the second approach, the teacher views the whole of the communicative situation and responds to the learners' overall performance—that is, discourse analysis is the starting point for evaluation.

### *The Language Analysis Approach*

The language analysis approach to evaluation has predictable consequences. Language teachers who know their classes also know which errors they are likely to make and can easily predict these errors from experience, or from native language interference (contrastive analysis) and difficulties within the system of the target language (error analysis). Most of the types of errors in the chart below would appear on nearly every language teacher's list of common mistakes:

| *Category of Error* | *Example* |
|---|---|
| Phonetics | Problems with /w/ versus /v/ |
| Morphology | *She catched* |
| Concord | *He like football* |
| Lexis | *I think he is very sympathetic* |
| Syntax | *You want I help?* |
| Sentence structure | Poor constructions |
| Paragraph structure | Incoherence, lack of connectives |

Clearly, all these elements of language are important; they appear at the phoneme, word, sentence, and paragraph levels, and each is essential to the complex structure that is the English language. Correction of mistakes in these areas is also important; after all, the aim of correction is to improve the learners' performance.

Video is one means of gathering data on errors. However, if a teacher watches a video and looks for success or failure in the categories listed above, the result is a series of comments—praise and criticism—in response to what the video playback shows. For example, as the video plays the teacher might note (after 5 seconds) "pronunciation error," (7 seconds) "wrong verb," (20 seconds) "nice phrase to use," (28 seconds) "wrong tense," (35 seconds) "very bad pronunciation," and so on. The cataloguing of errors continues in direct linear response to the contents of the recording, and at the end the teacher has accumulated a list of good and bad points on which to comment.

Other means, however, are available for collecting the same information. Audio recordings, practice in the language laboratory or listening center, and classroom dialogue give teachers a great deal of information on speech. Writing focuses on materials meant for the written mode or on the invention and fantasy of students. Both types of writing provide a record of and insights into a student's mastery of traditional grammar. The particular advantage of video over these other means is that it shows more than just the language, so more than the language is available for analysis.

### *The Discourse Analysis Approach*

Evaluating the learners' performance and communicative ability using a discourse-level approach takes into account the students' need to master the elements of English, but it starts from a different premise than language analysis does. The first consideration is the whole discourse: *How well has the student performed the communication task?* The efficacy of this approach is tested in the following imaginary but realistic scene:

> You chance upon an open-air sermon given by a skilled preacher. The sermon ends to rapturous acclaim. As the crowd disperses, you overhear remarks suggesting that the listeners think highly of the speech: "He's a fine man and a great preacher!" "He touches my soul!" or "What a powerful sermon!"

The preceding comments are the typical responses of the ordinary citizen to a powerful speech, not of applied linguists or language teachers. Everyday folk do not say "Hear those subjunctives!" or "Pretty impressive connectives there!" and still less "I was really impressed by the extended noun phrases." The assessment results instead from an instinctive understanding of the communicative power of what has been said—a global appraisal of the whole discourse. The layperson knows the speech has been effective not by analyzing the language at the word or sentence level but by appreciating the communicative value of what has been said. This type of assessment is the starting point for the evaluation of most video recordings of learners' performances.

## Assessing Communicative Competence

Teachers can apply to a learner's performance on video the same type of critique used by people who listen to a sermon. If a group of near-beginners are asked to talk about themselves and their background on camera, the teacher can first ask:

- Have the learners satisfactorily and efficiently introduced themselves?

More detailed questions follow:

- Was the description of the speaker's home town well presented?
- Did the speaker employ a simple yet appropriate structure to convey the meaning?

At a more advanced level, when the presentation contains more diverse content or more speakers, additional questions are possible:

- How coherent was the explanation of (the new product)?
- How convincing was (the forecast of performance)?
- Who in the group came out of the negotiations best? Why?

Other questions might concentrate on a different aspect of the communication:

- Was the speaker's mode of address appropriate for the audience? (The sermon-giver's was!)

- Did the speaker's gestures match the language used?
- Did the speaker's body language signal the same information as the text?

When cultural or social factors come into play, the teacher might ask:

- Was the degree of formality correct?
- Was the language appropriate for the audience?
- Was the register the right one to use for this exposition?

As the analysis progresses, questions to the speakers can focus on finer points:

- Why were your interruptions so unsuccessful?
- How did your opponent manage to hold the floor so well?
- Why were your attempts at supporting the compromise solution you wanted so unsuccessful?

These questions change the focus from a view of the total communication (compare with the preacher above) to a more detailed analysis of the communication from various points of view, as I explain below.

### *Paralinguistic Communication: Gestures and Body Language*

To evaluate the paralinguistic communication in an unsuccessful attempt at supporting a compromise solution, for example, the teacher might play back the recording and note that the speaker merely murmured, "Yes, I agree," with a barely perceptible nod. The feedback could point out that the situation called for a far stronger paralinguistic signal. Depending on the learner's cultural background, the signal could be more vigorous nodding, direct eye contact with the proposer, or a thump on the table in appreciation of the proposal.

The cultural dimension is particularly important in cross-cultural attempts at paralinguistic communication. The 1989 TESOL convention produced an interesting contrast at the video symposium. The representative from Finland argued that video was necessary to show the lively nature of dialogues in English: all movement and body language. The speaker from Mexico pointed out the value of video in showing her learners the extent to which English speakers are expressionless and static.

### *Communicative Strategies*

Next the teacher can look at the language used: "Yes, I agree," may be too weak an utterance to carry conviction. The speaker needs to learn more effective strategies or gambits for making the point—in this case, firmly expressing strong agreement. The learner can then be encouraged to practice appropriate phrases: "Let me say right now that I am in total agreement with. . . ." or "That's a very good proposal, because it means that we can. . . ."

Within the context of the language-learning program as a whole, practicing these phrases has nothing in common with so-called phrasebook learning. The learner may well begin by learning the phrases in sections (main clause and dependent clause, for example) and without grammatical analysis. But in a holistic approach the learner has such phrases available for use on other occasions when they are appropriate and can produce the following:

- Let me say that . . .
- That's a very good (NOUN PHRASE). . . .
- . . . because it means that he can (VERB PHRASE to express consequence). . . .

Learners of a language should also be aware of the many other factors that influence the success of the communication and the choice of what to say—the appropriateness of each phrase for a specific context, for example. Further, the learner must choose the right moment, say the phrase with appropriate intonation and stress patterns, and successfully articulate the vocabulary items. This list of factors, however, begins to echo the taxonomy of mistakes one could expect to find through contrastive analysis: errors in phonetics, intonation, and the like. In fact, a closer look at the reasons for the preacher's success, or the success or failure of students in communicating, brings us closer to the discrete items of language covered by the general term *grammar*.

### *The Elements of Language Required for Communicative Competence*

The phrases the student needs to learn and use will, of course, be formed according to the rules of English grammar. Depending on the complexity of the phrase and the student's level of English, the grammar underlying the phrase will be either a realization of material known to the student or part of the planned syllabus of material the student has yet to learn.

The grammar in one sentence from an example above can be analyzed as shown in the table. However, few students will want to approach a sentence from such a difficult starting point based on a purely grammatical description. Rather, their understanding of the underlying grammatical principle, of the system of English, will manifest itself in their ability to cope with such sentences and manipulate similar ones in the correct contexts.

| *Language Item* | *Grammatical Explanation* |
|---|---|
| That's a . . . | Formulaic phrase used for identification; cataphoric use of *that* |
| very | Intensifier modifying an adjective |
| good proposal | Nondeclinable adjective + noun |
| because | Conjunction introducing a subordinate clause of reason |
| he can | Modal verb; irregular third person singular ending |

The phrase ***it means that,*** used to introduce a subsidiary subordinate clause in the original utterance, is omitted from the table because I presume that the target learner has difficulty coping with its syntactic value. This feature may well be part of the English program in the future, to be learned when the student is ready for such syntactic complexity. And just as few students want the heavy grammatical analysis, not many teachers will want to describe the phrase in these terms: " 'It' is an anaphoric reference to 'proposal' introducing a clause of reason that contains its own obligatory complementary clause." Nevertheless, the role of grammar in the system remains clear. It is central to the construction of English sentences, and students must acquire an understanding of it in terms that they can comprehend.

## From Discourse Level to the Elements of Grammar

The question remains: How do we link discourse analysis to elements of grammar? The communicative approach to evaluating students' performance indeed results in a consideration of grammar—the elements of language so necessary for communication. However, the starting point is not grammar but the communicative ability and performance of the language learner.

The progression from discourse analysis to grammar is illustrated by a list of checkpoints and remarks made by a teacher in evaluating a student—in this case, one who is not very successful. The first point is reminiscent of the crowd's reactions to the preacher above. The later points are those found in the language analysis approach referred to at the beginning of the chapter (and that the teacher, knowing the student, could have predicted).

| *Checklist on Worksheet* | *Comments on Performance* |
|---|---|
| Overall performance | Pleasant manner after a nervous start, but didn't really engage the audience. |
| Structure of talk | Good points, but made in isolation; they didn't lead anywhere. |
| Use of notes and aids | Well prepared, but not used to the best advantage, especially the visual aids. |
| Gestures | Too rehearsed and unnatural. |
| Sentence construction | Carefully prepared simple sentences; complexity avoided even when required by the text; mistakes in word order. |
| Grammar points | Conditional forms wrong: *if I would go;* omission of *-ly* on adverbs: *it shone bright.* |
| Range of vocabulary | Limited; too many "false friends" from (Spanish/French). |
| Intonation | Monotonous; lacking in contrastive intonation when explaining oppositions. |
| Pronunciation | Strong bilabial fricative for /w/. |

Such worksheets can be kept on file as blanks, ready for use at any time.

### *Roles of the Teacher and the Learners*

Watching a video playback to evaluate a performance is quite different from marking a written text. When learners see and hear themselves on screen, they frequently recognize their own errors, and if they do not, someone else in the class probably will. But if it is true that learners spot their own mistakes, what is the role of the teacher?

First, the teacher is freed from the immediate correction of mistakes to concentrate on giving feedback to the class at a higher level. With a known class, errors are likely to recur from student to student, so the teacher can give feedback on language points and grammar to the entire group on errors common to all.

Second, the teacher can coordinate the feedback and evaluation contributed by the learners themselves. A useful sequence of correction is *learner–peer group–teacher*. The learner has the first chance to comment on the performance as it is played back, whether to praise or to criticize. The peer group then comments, if the learner did not, or follows up on the learner's self-evaluation. The teacher brings up the rear, summing up the important points for the benefit of the class.

The sequence is feasible only if the learners have the sophistication to make suitable comments. If they do not, the teacher's first task is to teach them how to observe or, perhaps more commonly, how to speak up about what they observe. Assuming that they are able, the learners usually comment on what they have been studying: grammar in one form or another, for the vast majority of learners. The result may be an accurate set of comments with praise and criticism, but with the hodgepodge character of an assessment carried out in real time. This linear assessment is useful, but even more so is an overall picture of the common errors in grammar. It is this analysis that the teacher provides when the students cannot.

More sophisticated learners, those in special courses in, say, presentation skills, will be aware of other factors, such as the use of visual aids, stance, eye contact with the audience, or similar paralinguistic features. Alternatively, the learner may feel that the beginning of the presentation was good but that the zest and pace were lost at a particular point in the exposition. Such reactions from the learners help the teacher with the overall analysis.

The next step for the teacher is to show the learners what is required in the analysis. The sequence suggested above applies here, but more detail is added. The scale of analysis descends from the discourse as a whole (the preacher) to the phonemic level (the correction of the pronunciation of one sound):

- *Discourse level* analysis checks on the communicative success of the entire event.
- *Strategic* analysis discusses possible gambits and key utterances.
- *Register and appropriateness* of language can be considered.
- *Paralinguistic features and gestures* appear at this level of analysis and at all lower levels.
- *Sentence-level* analysis concentrates on specific phrases.
- A knowledge of *grammar* can investigate *syntax.*
- New *vocabulary* items can be discussed.
- At the word level, *concord* of case, gender, and number and other types of agreement can be checked.
- *Phonetic* improvements can be made in all utterances at a variety of levels: intonation, stress, rhythm.
- Native language *interference* causes predictable errors in certain sounds.

### Observation Tasks for Learners

The suggestions for evaluation assume a simple scenario: during the live recording the class looks on silently while certain participants perform and are recorded, the videotape is played back, and feedback is given. The members of the class not being recorded should be supplied with observation tasks for several reasons. First, in a large class observation tasks prevent unruly or noisy behavior on the part of those who are not being recorded and have to stay in the classroom in otherwise bored silence. Because observers have to comment on the performance afterwards, everyone is involved in the recording in one way or another. Second, the focus for observation provided by the worksheet heightens the students' awareness of the language learning process, which leads to better analysis by the students. Teachers can distribute tasks to match the learners' needs by placing the emphasis of the observation at any point on the scale of analysis, or to match the ability of each learner by allocating different tasks to different learners. Flexibility in task allocation allows the teacher to deal with large classes, classes of mixed ability, or small classes.

The following set of observation tasks can form the basis of one designed by teachers (and students) to meet the needs of their own classes. The teacher can keep a set of task cards on hand for immediate use, with blanks available for adaptation, and can extend the first three tasks to meet specific needs by referring to questions, summary restatements, checks, hypotheses, or other elements. Tasks four through six can be extended to cover any element of the language: tense forms, use of adjectives, word order, intonation, phonemes, and so on.

1. Listen to Participant A and assess the communicative performance.
2. Watch the body language used by Participant B and assess its effectiveness and appropriateness.
3. Note the number of interruptions from Participant P and assess how successful they are.
4. Write down any particularly good, appropriate phrases you hear and who said them.
5. Write down any particularly inappropriate phrases you hear and who said them.
6. Write down vocabulary errors you notice.

***Large classes.*** With small classes or committed learners it is easy to give out appealing tasks. More difficult is the class of 15, 20, 30, or even more students who need to be kept occupied. One method is to introduce them to cross-group discussion before the recording and explain why their attention is needed. Each individual must interpret his or her notes to others in the class.

For example, in a class with 30 observers, the teacher identifies six observation tasks, A through F, taken from lists prepared beforehand, and makes five sets of each of the six task cards. The class is then divided into six groups of five students, each member of each group receiving the same task card:

- A A A A A have Task A
- B B B B B have Task B
- C C C C C have Task C
- D D D D D have Task D
- E E E E E have Task E
- F F F F F have Task F.

The teacher then checks that the students understand their observation tasks and starts recording, keeping the recording to a length that will not tax the patience of the class. During the recording each student silently makes notes according to the observation task card. After the recording, each group pools results so that members gain information from each other. Even the weakest in the group then has something worthwhile on paper.

The class is then divided into cross-groups—five groups of six:

- Group 1: A B C D E F
- Group 2: A B C D E F
- Group 3: A B C D E F
- Group 4: A B C D E F
- Group 5: A B C D E F

Students within each group share observations to create an overall impression of the performance. Optionally, each group can prepare and deliver a short statement on what they have observed.

The first type of group (all C's) can begin as a large group and then be subdivided during the discussion. The second type of group (A B C D E F) should be kept small to facilitate the exchange of information. With very large classes, the exercise should be run in the class in parallel as often as necessary.

***Special classes.*** Courses in English for specific purposes (ESP) invite a special set of observation tasks. In the following examples, taken from actual courses, at least one aspect of communication has prominence:

| *ESP Course* | *Feature* |
|---|---|
| Office staff | Telephone skills for incoming calls |
| Overseas agents | Skills for on-site evaluation of progress |
| Logistics managers | Computer screen and printout reading skills |
| Sales personnel | Presentation skills |
| Immigration officers | Eliciting and checking of information |
| Journalists | Information retrieval of all types |
| Diplomats | Register and appropriateness |

Each of the courses above requires a different emphasis in course content and methodology. Similarly, the way the students' progress is measured will vary, and the observation sheets will carry a different emphasis.

## Conclusion

Recording learners' performance in class with a video camera is exciting and challenging for students and teacher alike. The recordings contain a wealth of information that the teacher can use to assess the students' communicative ability. Teachers new to video should understand that the methodology of assessment with video differs from the traditional methods of marking students' work. Video demands a new approach.

# II

# SELECTING VIDEO

# 7

# CRITERIA FOR SELECTING VIDEO MATERIALS

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In the course of presenting workshops on language teaching with video, I am often asked to recommend video programs, particularly films on video, that can be used successfully with English as a second language (ESL) and English as a foreign language (EFL) students. Although I don't usually show complete films in class, preferring to work with excerpted scenes, I usually cite a few films, such as *Witness* and *Breaking Away*, that seem to work well in their entirety. In a slight variation on this question, I was once asked if I had used any films that didn't work; in response I told of showing a film I had great affection for, *The Wizard of Oz*, and of being highly disappointed, even a little hurt, at its lukewarm reception by a group of Chinese students who seemed less than enchanted by its elements of fantasy. I related that I hadn't used the film in my classes since (and perhaps my questioner crossed the film off her list of possibilities). Later I came across an article in the *TESOL Video News* enthusiastically endorsing *The Wizard of Oz*; the teacher described her experience watching her students view the film as "exhilarating and transcendental" while the students (mostly Oriental) were "absorbed in the enchantment" (Thomas, 1990, p. 2). Perhaps I should take a return trip to Oz.

The anecdote above illustrates a point to bear in mind when considering the criteria for selecting video materials presented here. Criteria, when viewed as a set of should's and should not's, can be overly confining and serve to narrow the possibilities of what videos to use with students. The would-be user of video should come away from this chapter not with a list of programs to use or not to use in ESL/EFL classes but with a sense that the number of video programs that can be used profitably with students is enormous. Selecting videos for language teaching is not a matter of adhering to strict rules or of eliminating possibilities. Instead, it involves choosing programs appropriate for the type of task or activity students will do in conjunction with viewing. Thus, when in doubt as to whether a particular program will work, the best course is usually to try it with your students; if it is less than successful, try setting a different activity or task with the program before giving up on it.

Because the criteria presented here are most useful as guidelines for matching video programs with suitable classroom activities, I begin with a brief overview of the two major types of activities used with video and how they evolved out of the nature of the video medium itself. These activities or tasks can be classified, following Tomalin (1986), into two basic types: activities working with *language generated by the video program itself* and activities involving *language generated by the students about the video program*. The first type of activity tends to focus on tasks that help students comprehend the language heard on the program. The second type uses video as a stimulus for discussion and writing. In other words, video can be used as a vehicle to present language to students or as a stimulus to elicit language from students. Both types of activities can be, and often are, used in conjunction.

Two examples from a workshop on learning Chinese through media that I regularly give illustrate the two types of activities. First, as an example of using video to present language, I use a brief excerpt from a Chinese-language soap opera in which a mother introduces her five unmarried sons to an eligible young woman. The language presented involves the language function of introducing someone; the gestures used by the characters in the scene make the dialogue ("This is so-and-so") quite clear to the students watching.

As for using video as a stimulus, in my workshop I show a *Windham Hill* video of images from China—scenery, artisans working, people engaged in daily activities—images accompanied by music but not language. I ask the students to write their own, very simple narrative voice-over in Chinese to accompany the visuals. In this case, I am not using video to present language, as there is no language presented on the video program itself, but as a stimulus for students to generate their own language about what they see.

Most of the early video programs produced specifically to teach a second language used video to present language and to enable students to comprehend the language generated by the program itself, much in the manner of my use of the Chinese introduction scene mentioned above. This focus on comprehension-type activities undoubtedly grew out of the nature of the medium, for video, as primarily visual, has certain characteristics that set it apart from printed materials. Like all media, video can be viewed as a type of symbol system. One way to classify symbol systems is according to Goodman's (1968) dimension of notationality; they can be viewed on a continuum between notational and nonnotational. A notational system has "a set of separate, discontinuous characters (for example, a musical score) correlated with a field of reference which is similarly segregated (sounded pitches) so that any character in the system isolates the object or objects it stands for" (Gardner, Howard, & Perkins, 1974, p. 31). Musical notation, in which each pitch is represented by a note in a musical score, is an example of a pure notational system. Printed language, although it contains ambiguities and irregularities, is basically a notational system in which particular written letters or graphs correspond to specific sounds. A nonnotational system, on the other hand, refers to a system without a set of disjoint characters; pictorial representation (photographs, drawings, paintings) is an example of such a system. As a primarily pictorial or visual medium, video (under which I include film and broadcast television) can be considered nonnotational.

Little research on the possible effects of working with different symbol systems has focused on second language learning situations, but research with children indicates that working with a nonnotational system, such as video, differs from working with a notational system, such as print. For example, video allows for easier "mental processing" than print (Salomon, 1979); in other words, because the images on the television screen are for the most part representations of people or objects and hence are relatively lifelike, they require less decoding than a printed text. As Salomon (1979) states, "It becomes possible to speak of ease of extracting information from symbolically coded messages" (p. 219), and in this sense it is often easier to extract information or make meaning from a nonnotational system such as video (so long as the video program provides a high degree of visual support, a point I examine below). By providing a more complete context of actions, gestures, and pictures, video can make spoken language more comprehensible, especially to beginning-level students and to students in EFL situations who may have little exposure to the second language outside the classroom.

As mentioned, most English language teaching (ELT) videos produced to date attempt to capitalize on the visual element to make clear those aspects of language that are being presented on the videotape—for example, language functions such as introducing and apologizing. Indeed, much has already been written on video's ability to make messages more comprehensible to language learners by providing "visual support"; video's nonnotational, visual system can make it easier (compared with programs on audiotape, for instance) for learners to comprehend the language being used in the program. As Tomalin (1986) puts it, "Video offers visual and audio clues to meaning. The learner doesn't just hear the language, but sees the context in which it is used" (p. 1). By allowing students to see the speakers, situations, and settings, video's visual channel (the pictures) clearly aids comprehension of the aural channel (the spoken language) (Lonergan, 1984; Allan, 1985).

If I use video to present language, then, I hope to use the nonnotational, visual symbol system of video to make the language more comprehensible to students. On the other hand, if I use video to elicit language from the students watching the program, I may not be so concerned that the visual element aids comprehension of the language used on the program (for example, I may want them to write about the memories evoked by the pictures on the screen and thus will not even play the sound for them). Therefore, an important consideration in the selection of a video program for classroom use is the type of task or activity students will do in conjunction with viewing. That is, the criteria for selecting video programs depend on whether the video program is being used as a means of presenting language or as a stimulus to elicit language.

I present here two sets of criteria. The first set is applicable when video is used to present language but often becomes less important when video is used as a visual stimulus. The second set of criteria applies whether video is used to present or to elicit language.

## Factors Affecting Comprehensibility

Using video to present language usually involves comprehension-type tasks; therefore comprehensibility is a major criterion in selecting programs for language presentation. Comprehensibility of a video is primarily affected by (a) the degree of visual support, (b) the clarity of picture and sound, (c) the density of language, (d) the speech delivery, (e) the language content, and (f) the language level. These factors differ greatly from those that make a printed text comprehensible. Whereas the last two factors would also affect the comprehensibility of print materials, factors (a) through (d) apply to video but not print, implying that selecting videos calls for a different approach from that for selecting print materials. I consider each factor in turn.

### *Degree of Visual Support*

Visual support refers to the degree to which the visual element aids in the comprehension of the verbal messages. When using video to present language, it is important to choose scenes with a high degree of visual support. The Chinese introduction scene described above is easy to understand because it has a high degree of visual support. Students who don't know a word of Chinese immediately know what is happening based on the visual images: the mother points out each of her five sons one by one, they each nod to the woman to whom they are being introduced, and she nods and smiles back.

Another excerpt from a Chinese soap opera contrasts with that scene: a man and woman are sitting on a sofa talking. Students cannot understand what is happening because the scene has a low degree of visual support; that is, it offers few visual clues to what the conversation is about. A good deal of what happens on television situation comedies involves people sitting on the sofa or at the table talking; such scenes offer some visual support in terms of facial expressions, gestures, and setting, but more often than not the visuals give the beginning-level student little help in understanding the scene.

To test the degree of visual support in a program or excerpt, view it first with the sound turned off to see how much you can comprehend based on the pictures alone. Something else to keep in mind is that camera work can sometimes enhance visual support; for example, when the camera focuses on the person speaking (especially in closeup shots), the viewer can more clearly discern facial expressions, which communicate a great deal. Location shots (shots that clearly establish the location of a particular scene as a bank, an airport, and so on) may also help comprehension by establishing a specific context and setting for the scene, which in turn may make the language used more predictable: we can readily predict what someone might be saying to a bank teller, but two people sitting on the sofa could be talking about anything.

A scene with a low degree of visual support is less useful for presenting language, but it can still be used as a stimulus to elicit language. For example, if the students' task is to imagine, hypothesize, or predict what is being said based on the visuals, a lower degree of visual support provides a desirable ambiguity. If the visuals make what is happening too obvious, there is nothing for the students to hypothesize about.

### *Clarity of Picture and Sound*

Commercially produced ELT programs vary in sound and picture quality, as do any ½-inch videotapes that have been dubbed (copied) from other ½-inch tapes. Most language students, particularly beginners, have little tolerance for poor sound quality. In addition, nonlinguistic elements on the soundtrack (e.g., music, background noise) can distract students. One of the advantages of using video with beginners is that they often successfully comprehend a scene or situation in the new language; nothing precludes this success quite so much as unclear sound. From a technical standpoint, the visual element is less likely to be so unclear that it impedes comprehension unless the videotape is a tape that is a copy of a copy of a copy—or worse.

Again, the importance of a criterion such as clear sound depends on whether you want the video to present or to elicit language. For example, when presenting language, you might give students a list of idioms that occur on the tape and ask them to tell you to stop the tape when they hear a specific idiom so that you can use the visual context to clarify its meaning. For this activity, you should choose a video with good sound quality because students are listening closely for particular language items. When using video as a stimulus, however, you might show a scene with the sound turned completely off and ask students to hypothesize as to what is happening in that scene purely on the basis of what they see, perhaps by writing a story based on it. In fact, a recently produced ELT video program entitled *Contrasts and Contradictions* offers a series of provocative images, with no language, as a springboard for student discussion and writing. For video used in this way, sound quality is not a concern at all; in fact, with silent viewing techniques (see Stempleski's chapter in this volume), you can even use a video in a language other than the target language, because students only watch the program; they do not listen to it.

### *Density of Language*

Another factor to consider in selecting video programs is the language density—the amount of language spoken over the course of a particular scene. It is usually the density of language that most contributes to a video scene being perceived as easy or difficult to comprehend.

The amount of spoken language in a particular length of video can vary tremendously; a 5-minute video excerpt may contain only four or five lines of dialogue, an example being the murder scene in the film *Witness*. On the other hand, some scenes, even some films in their entirety, can be very "talky," good examples being film versions of plays, such as *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*. Interestingly enough, a student in a workshop I gave on media-based methodology used this film and in the process discovered that the scenes that worked best were those in which the director "opened up" the play, that is, those scenes that were set on actual location and that filmed actions only spoken about in the stage version. The visual aspect of such scenes obviously made for easier comprehension, in addition to the fact that those scenes, not having to rely on spoken exposition, were often less talky.

### *Speech Delivery*

Clarity of speech, speech rate, and accent are all factors in determining how difficult a video excerpt will be for students to comprehend. Some actors are not known for speaking clearly, an oft-cited example being Marlon Brando in films such as *The Godfather*. Accents can also affect comprehensibility; for example, British accents can be difficult for students accustomed to American accents (and vice versa).

Commercially produced ELT videos can have an advantage with respect to speech delivery as they often control the speed of speech, at least to some extent, and tend to avoid accents that depart significantly from the standard accent of television broadcasters and announcers. The result is often increased comprehensibility. On the other hand, authentic (i.e., non-ELT) programs can be useful in familiarizing students with regional accents and rapid speech rates, though they will be more difficult for low- and even intermediate-level students.

## *Language Content*

In using video to present language, an important factor to consider is the linguistic items (particular grammatical structures, language functions, or colloquial expressions) presented in the scene. I am often asked how to find specific linguistic items, particularly grammar points, in video materials. One answer is to use commercial ELT materials, which usually have a language focus built into each scene. The great advantage of these materials is that you save the time of looking through authentic materials yourself. One way to locate occurrences of particular linguistic items in authentic materials is to think of situations that would typically call for an item and show its usage in context. For example, a scene in which two people who haven't seen each other for a long time meet again (such as the scene in *Casablanca* where Rick and Elsa meet again in Rick's restaurant) would be likely to contain uses of the present perfect and present perfect continuous tenses ("How have you been?" "What have you been doing lately?" ) as well as the past tense ("The last time we saw each other was . . . .").

Another element to look for in choosing programs is repetition of a linguistic feature in a particular scene, which presumably makes that feature more salient. Commercially produced ELT videos are often effective because they usually contain scenes (or a series of scenes) in which language functions or structures are introduced and then repeated or recycled. Such repetition is helpful for lower-level students but can be difficult to find in authentic materials. In the Chinese introduction scene mentioned above, the mother fortunately had five sons, and in introducing them she repeated the same language five times. Of course, one advantage to using videotape is that you can always provide some repetition by replaying the excerpt.

One way to select programs is to try to find video scenes that contain the language item you wish to present, but in actuality it is often easier to start with a program or scene and see what activities it suggests to you. If you watch programs yourself with the idea that every program is potential material for your classes, possibilities will begin to suggest themselves. For example, after watching the murder scene from the film

*Witness,* I began to think of how terrified the boy must have been and what must have been racing through his mind. The task I set for students was to imagine what he was thinking and write an interior monologue for him.

### Language Level

The level of difficulty of the language in a video program is also a factor to consider in selecting material for comprehension-type tasks. For example, although I like Woody Allen's film, *Annie Hall,* much of the language in it is simply too difficult for low- and low-intermediate-level students to comprehend without the teacher spending an inordinate amount of time trying to explain.

There are at least two ways to use video programs that contain language too difficult for the level of your students. First, you do not need to show the whole program; there are always individual scenes that can be used independently. For example, I have used a scene in *Annie Hall*—when Annie, having just met Alvy, drives him to her apartment—to work on question forms (as they ask each other relatively simple questions). Second, you can always grade the task instead of the material—that is, use a difficult scene if you give the students an easy task in conjunction with viewing. In my Chinese workshop I often show scenes that the students (all absolute beginners) cannot understand at all because the language is too difficult for them; the easy task assigned to them is to point out the objects or actions that they would like me to tell them how to say in Chinese. Selection of videos is thus determined not only by the language level of the video program but by the demands of the task as well.

## Criteria for Selecting a Video

Degree of visual support, clarity of picture and sound, density of language, speech delivery, and language content and level should all be kept in mind when selecting videos to present language. If you are using video primarily as a stimulus, those factors may be less important. There are, however, several factors to consider whether the video presents or elicits language: interest, appropriateness of content, length of sequence, independence of sequence, and availability of related materials.

### Interest

As the *Wizard of Oz* anecdote illustrates, students' tastes vary; what one student finds interesting, another may not. In general, I have had success with films that deal with human relationships or relatively universal concerns or themes. Genre films, such as horror films, action films, or mysteries, seem more subject to individual taste and may not be as widely appealing. News and documentary programs can often be used successfully as most students have some degree of interest in current events; however, news programs in particular have a high degree of language density and can lack visual support, especially when only the newscaster's face on screen (a "talking head") speaks to the audience. Talk shows, perhaps because they tend to deal with human relationships, also tend to generate interest.

Student interest is generated not only by the video program itself but also by the activities done in conjunction with viewing. In fact, as a particular program is seldom interesting to everyone, it is often more feasible to generate interest by accompanying the program with a variety of challenging tasks and activities. (See the chapters by Stempleski, Stoller, and Ladau-Harjulin in this volume for examples of the range of activities that have been developed for use with video.)

### Appropriateness of Content

A teacher needs to be sensitive to the cultural background of students when considering whether the content of a particular video program might be offensive and in deciding whether to show scenes that contain sex, excessive violence, or obscene language. In this respect, broadcast television programs and older films are not as likely to be offensive as more recent films.

### Length of Sequence

Many proponents of teaching with video advocate the use of short excerpts: Tomalin (1986) recommends using excerpts less than 5 minutes long; 30-second to 12-minute lengths have also been suggested (Willis, 1983). Using relatively short excerpts allows the students time to do the activities in conjunction with viewing the video; 5 to 10 minutes of video can easily provide enough work for an hour-long class period—especially when using video as a stimulus, which involves pre- or postviewing activities, or both. To use a complete film, try breaking it up into a series of scenes and accompanying activities to use once or twice a week over the course of the semester; in this manner I have used films such as *Breaking Away* and *The Karate Kid* in their entirety during an 8-week course.

## *Independence of Sequence*

Using relatively short sequences often entails excerpting scenes from films, television dramas, and documentaries that can be used independently. As Allan (1985) comments, it is important to choose scenes that can stand on their own and not to choose scenes in which "a lot of necessary information about characters or plot has been established in previous episodes" (p. 25). For example, whereas a film such as *Annie Hall* can be difficult for students to follow because of its episodic structure and frequent use of flashbacks, it does contain numerous scenes that I have used by themselves, without ever showing the film in its entirety: when Annie and Alvy meet (to work on question forms), Alvy's recalling his elementary school classmates and teachers (as a stimulus for writing about childhood memories of school), and Alvy's going to Annie's house for dinner to meet her family members and comparing them with his family (for cultural comparison, as the two families are from different "worlds").

When I show only excerpts of a film, I often schedule a showing of the whole film for the last day of class. In addition, showing excerpts sometimes has the nice effect of stimulating involvement with English outside the classroom, as many students, after seeing some excerpts, become interested enough to rent the videotape and view the whole film on their own.

## *Availability of Related Materials*

Another factor to consider in selecting materials is the availability of print materials to accompany the video. Related materials include film scripts (for example, several of Woody Allen's scripts have been published in book form, as have the scripts of many "classic" films, such as *It's a Wonderful Life*) and transcripts of television shows, particularly talk shows and news features (several shows, "60 Minutes" being one example, tell viewers where to write for transcripts). In addition, many films are based on novels, short stories, and plays, and there are many "novelizations" of popular films that students can read or the teacher can use to develop activities.

## Conclusion

Selecting video programs for classroom use is perhaps best viewed as a matter not of hard-and-fast rules but of choosing programs appropriate for the type of activity—presentation or stimulus—that students will do in conjunction with viewing. Criteria such as degree of visual support, clarity of picture and sound, density of language, speech delivery, language content, and language level should be taken into account in selecting videos to present language, but they are not always as relevant when video is being used to elicit student-produced language, particularly when it is primarily the visual element that is being used as the stimulus. Other factors—interest, appropriateness of content, length of sequence, independence of sequence, and availability of related materials—are usually relevant whether video is being employed to present or to elicit language.

The guidelines given here for selecting video materials are best used not to rule out materials before actually trying them with students but as considerations to keep in mind while viewing video programs for possible classroom use.

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## *Videotapes, Films, and Television Shows*

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*Places in the heart.* (1984). New York: CBS/Fox Video.

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*The wizard of Oz.* (1939). Culver City, CA: MGM/UA Home Video.

8

# AN OVERVIEW OF CURRENTLY AVAILABLE ESL/EFL VIDEO MATERIALS

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In this article we provide some guidance to the English as a second language (ESL) or English as a foreign language (EFL) teacher, teacher trainer, or administrator who is interested in using and possibly buying video materials. We focus on English language teaching (ELT) videos, those produced specifically to aid in the learning and teaching of ESL or EFL or in the training of teachers of ESL or EFL, and on videos for classroom use rather than for self-study (although in many cases a video can serve both purposes). The materials we describe are for retail sale, not those available exclusively for broadcast by television. We do, however, include retail videotape versions of television materials.

Excluded from consideration is a large class of ELT videos and broadcast television programs produced for strictly local consumption. In Japan, for example, the NHK TV *Eikaiwa* or *Eigo* (*English Conversation*) series is better known and more popular than any of the materials described here. Our focus is ELT videos designed for an international audience.

A substantial number of English language teachers using video in classrooms, including some of the most enthusiastic and sophisticated videophiles, do not use much ELT video. Instead, they exploit news programs, documentaries, feature films, and other video materials designed for native speakers of English. This is particularly, but by no means exclusively, true of teachers working in English-speaking countries, who have easy access to such materials. In addition, these teachers are more likely to be native speakers of English who are able to interpret these resources both culturally and linguistically. We discuss these *native-speaker videos* as well.

## A Survey of the Field

### Chuck Passentino

Table 1 analyzes the contents of the *ESOL Video Materials Directory* (Hambrook, Passentino, Thomas, & Willetts, 1990). (The authors of this paper are the U.S. compilers of the *Directory*; Hambrook and Willetts are the United Kingdom-based compilers.) A brief look at the background of the *Directory* is necessary to understand the strengths and limitations of this survey.

A first draft of the *Directory* was prepared in 1988 with the intention of compiling an annotated list of all ELT videos available worldwide. The information was assembled in two principal ways: from publishers' and distributors' brochures and catalogues and from descriptions of video-related papers presented at the annual TESOL convention. Subsequent editions of the *Directory* have been compiled from the same sources. The *Directory* is therefore quite comprehensive in the area of commercially marketed ELT videos, and, because a high proportion of papers at the TESOL convention are given by U.S.-based professionals, the *Directory* also includes a large number of noncommercially marketed ELT videos from the United States. Productions of this kind from other parts of the world are hardly represented at all. The compilers have no regular informants outside Europe and North America, so the picture of, for example, Australian English videos is probably incomplete.

Up to now no minimum technical requirement has been set for inclusion of particular ELT videos. In the near future, however, we will limit the contents of the published *Directory* to professional quality productions, although we intend to continue to maintain a more comprehensive listing on database. Readers should note that many videos in the current edition of the *Directory* (in particular, many of the large number of noncommercially marketed titles) are known to us only through print announcements.

### Table 1. Analysis of Videos Listed in the *ESOL Video Materials Directory*[a]

| | Age[b] | | | | Level[b] | | | | | | Purpose[c] | | | | Price[c] | | | | | | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Language and Type** | **All** | **Children** | **Teens** | **Adults** | **All** | **Beg** | **Int** | **Adv** | **Beg/Int** | **Int/Adv** | **ACA** | **ESP** | **GEN** | **REF** | **$** | **$$** | **$$$** | **$$$$** | **R** | **?** | |
| British | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Instructional | 0 | 8 | 2 | 46 | 4 | 14 | 21 | 5 | 5 | 7 | 2 | 7 | 47 | 0 | 10 | 24 | 12 | 3 | 0 | 7 | 56 |
| Teacher Training | 2 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | — | — | — | — | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 3 |
| American | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Instructional | 2 | 7 | 0 | 40 | 10 | 6 | 7 | 4 | 12 | 10 | 0 | 8 | 37 | 4 | 9 | 9 | 7 | 7 | 2 | 15 | 49 |
| Teacher Training | 6 | 10 | 1 | 26 | 31 | 6 | 3 | 1 | 0 | 2 | — | — | — | — | 13 | 2 | 3 | 0 | 11 | 14 | 43 |
| Australian | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Instructional | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 4 |
| Teacher Training | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | — | — | — | — | 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| Other | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | 7 |
| Total | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 165 |

[a] *The ESOL Video Materials Directory*, by J. Hambrook, C. Passentino, P. Thomas, and J. Willetts, 1990, Alexandria, VA: Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages.

[b] Age and level refer to the target audience of instructional videotapes and to the subject(s) of teacher-training tapes. Beg = beginning; Int = intermediate; Adv = advanced.

[c] Purposes are defined as ACA = academic; ESP = English for special purposes; GEN = general; REF = refugee. Prices are defined as $ = less than $100; $$ = $100–$250; $$$ = $250–$500; $$$$ = more than $500; R = can be rented; ? = price unknown.

The disproportionate number of American English teacher-training videotapes shown in the table, a high proportion of which are not of professional quality, is due to the provenance of the data, explained above.

The table gives a false impression of the relative strength of American and British English instructional videotapes. All 56 of the British English instructional videos are marketed by major ELT publishers or distributors whereas approximately half of the 49 American English ones are distributed by small organizations or individuals; many of these are not of high technical quality. The 7 Australian English videos are distributed by the National Centre for English Language Teaching and Research at Macquarie University, Sydney.

In terms of the targeted age, level, and purpose of the videotapes in the table, 82% are general-purpose videotapes produced for adult learners. As for price, videos vary considerably. To some degree price depends on the length (number of hours) of a particular series, the extent of accompanying support materials, and technical quality. BBC English (the largest distributor of ELT videos), for example, charges an average price of approximately £50 (about $90) per hour of screen time. Very few videos cost less than $100.

## Short Descriptions of Some ELT Videos

The videos we have singled out for more detailed treatment are, in our opinion, among the best in their categories, but they are not necessarily good in all respects; in certain categories there are very few videos from which to choose. No purchaser should base a decision to buy such expensive materials on our opinion alone. Potential buyers should consult demonstration videotapes available from publishers and published reviews. Also, the field is developing rapidly, and new products are coming onto the market all the time.

One great divide in ELT materials is that between different varieties of English, in particular between American and British English. Many learners and teachers use materials of only one variety. The divide is wider in video materials than in print, because both nonverbal and verbal differences between cultures are apparent in video. We therefore consider American and British English videos separately.

The versions of materials described here are those available on videotape for retail sale. In several cases the same or similar material exists in one or several broadcast versions, reedited or repackaged for different markets. Annotations in italics in the descriptions are from the *ESOL Video Materials Directory* (Hambrook et al., 1990). Prices quoted were accurate as of December 1990 and are for NTSC VHS versions unless otherwise specified.

### American English Videos

Of the 49 American English instructional titles listed in the *Directory*, only 27 are of professional or broadcast quality—and by no means are they all well conceived pedagogically or well produced in other respects.

The shortage of high-quality American English ELT videos is attributable in large part to the absence of national organizations with an international perspective comparable to the BBC and the British Council on the other side of the Atlantic. Although the United States Information Agency (USIA) has been involved over the years in the development of radio and television materials to teach English (an ambitious collaboration with Maxwell Macmillan, *English Language Teaching by Broadcast/Family Album, USA*, is very near completion), it has not had a separate department comparable in output and longevity to BBC English, whose current catalogue lists 21 instructional video titles. (We discuss the important role of the BBC below.)

In the absence of such organizations, American English videos have been developed by entrepreneurs, school districts, or universities. In many cases the aims of these producers have been too ambitious for the resources and expertise available. Despite the wealth of experience in film and television production in the United States, this part of the industry is still at an early stage of development.

***1. Children: 5 to 11 years old.*** *Sharing a Song* (Bob Schneider, 1987, Addison-Wesley Publishing Co., World Language Division, Reading, MA 01867; telephone [617] 944–3700). *Twelve original songs sung on camera by Bob Schneider with help from young children. Variety of themes (daily routines, friendship, food, memories) and rhythms. One 60-minute tape (12 × five-minute songs).*

Bob Schneider's energy and enthusiasm make these simple songs very engaging. Also available are a useful Teacher's Guide, an Audio

Package (which includes an additional 17 songs), and an Activity Book (originally designed to accompany the Audio Package). Price: $99 (video only).

***2. Adults: high-beginning and low-intermediate levels.*** *Your Life in Your Hands* ( Joseph J. Deliso, 1984, Longman Publishing Group, Route 128, Reading, MA 01867; telephone [video representative] [914] 993–5160). *Romantic comedy about four young people starting out on their own in New York. Serial drama. Structural/functional syllabus. Two 60-minute tapes (8 × seven-minute and 7 × eight-minute episodes).*

This soap opera has the strengths and weaknesses of its network models. The story is thin and predictable (for some learners, this predictability may be an asset), but it is well told and engaging. Student Books and a Teacher's Manual are available. Price: $179 for each videotape; $329 for both. For a detailed description and review see *Small Screen,* 3(1), January 1990.

***3. Adults: intermediate level.*** *American Scenes* (Elliott Glass and Paul Arcario, 1985, Crossroads Video Inc., 15 Buckminster Lane, Manhasset, NY 11030; telephone [516] 365–3715). *Short skits grouped in seven thematic areas: travel, housing, food, university life, emergency situations, everyday living and social settings. Structural/situational syllabus. Seven 60-minute tapes (33 × two- to five-minute skits).*

The technical quality of this substantial series is not highly sophisticated and the acting is hammy, but it is saved by its lack of pretension. Because there is no continuing story, individual skits can be used in isolation. Supporting materials are very good. We advise contacting the distributor about price as a variety of packages are available. For a detailed description and review, see *Small Screen,* 3(1), January 1990.

***4. Adults: intermediate and advanced levels.*** *Authentic American Activities* (Edwin J. Cornelius, Jr., 1983, Pace Group International, 2020 SW 4th Ave., 7th Floor, Portland, OR 97201; telephone [503] 226–7223). Originally published in 1983 in Japan as part of a 19-hour English course. Three 60-minute videotapes: *Seattle and Its People, Life in Western America, San Francisco—I Love It!* Each videotape consists of five or six short sequences. For example, three of the sequences on the *Life in Western America* videotape focus on different rodeo events. Each film sequence is followed by a series of stills with voice-over ("Recap") and excerpts with on-screen transcription of what is said ("Highlights").

The strengths of these videotapes are the intrinsic interest of some of the subject matter, the information about certain aspects of American culture, and the number of substantially unscripted monologues. The *San Francisco* videotape is weaker than the other two, with very little language in several of the sequences and an inappropriate plug for a language school toward the end. The magazine format allows the user great flexibility. Price: $69.95 each; $209.85 for all three videotapes.

Cornelius is the most prolific developer of American English video materials. Most of his series, including the original from which this set is excerpted, were designed initially for the self-study market in Japan. Several of them have been broadcast internationally over World Net.

5. ***Adults: survival skills.*** *Communicating Survival* (1986, Arlington Community Television, Suite 300, GMU Metro Campus, 3401 North Fairfax Dr., Arlington, VA 22201; telephone [703] 524–2388). *Series to teach immigrants and refugees about vital public services in USA. 6 × fifteen-minute tapes: Emergency—Call 911; Help Wanted; Personal Checking; The Supermarket; Obtaining Health Care and The New Immigration Law.*

These short videotapes illustrate Hambrook's axiom: "Much rests on [the producer's] ability to define the precise aims and scope of each project . . . the more precise the aim, the more effective the resulting materials" (1979, p. 25). The aim here is very precise, and the intention quite modest; the materials are correspondingly effective. Price: $40 each. Also available in Khmer, Lao, Farsi, Spanish, and Vietnamese.

See also *Speak Easy*, described in the section on British English Videos.

## *British English Videos*

Largely because of the BBC's 30-year involvement with ELT television, British English videos are more numerous and generally superior in quality to their American English counterparts.

For a long time, BBC English (formerly BBC English by Radio and Television) held what has been called a "quasi-monopoly" (Lonergan, 1990) on British English ELT video production. Even now no other organization comes close to challenging the BBC in quantity and variety of videos for international distribution, in large part because of the BBC's expertise in assembling elaborate teams of collaborators, from European and other television networks to private businesses, both to assist with financing and to ensure an audience (Howse, 1979). The situation is changing, however. Virtually all the major British ELT materials publishers have video listings now—and Longman UK, having absorbed Lingual House/Filmscan, lists over 20 titles in its current catalogue.

***1. Children: 6 and older.*** *Muzzy in Gondoland* (1986, BBC English, PO Box 76, Bush House, Strand, London WC2B 4PH; telephone [01] 257-2886). ***Animated cartoon story about Muzzy, a friendly monster from outer space and his friends. Serial drama. Structural/functional syllabus. One 75-minute tape (6 × twelve-minute episodes).***

Very good, indeed often beautiful, animation, excellent voices, great variety of methods of presentation, delightful music—all these make this series a hit. Price: £55 (PAL); £82 (NTSC). Also available in French, German, Italian, and Spanish. A sequel, *Muzzy Comes Back* (1990) is now available. For a review, see *Small Screen, 1*(3), September 1988.

***2. Adults: beginning level.*** *Follow Me* (1979–1981, BBC English [see address above]). ***Mixed format series (sitcom, documentary, comedy thriller). Part of tv-based multi-media course. Functional syllabus related to Council of Europe Threshold level. Eight tapes: 60 × fifteen-minute units.***

This series is the longest, most elaborate one mentioned in this chapter. It is hammy, even vulgar, but it has been exceptionally successful. *The Economist* called it "the most widely followed teaching course in history" (McCallen, 1989). The series starts at the very beginning level. Instead of choosing a conventional presentation of simple material, the writers make minimal language work overtime by allowing themselves an infinite number of settings and situations. By now the series is beginning to show its age, but it has established a benchmark in terms of scope, variety of presentation, a well-focused syllabus, and comprehensive supporting materials. Price for each half of the series (including books and audiotapes): £200 (PAL); £300 (NTSC).

*Grapevine Video* (1989, Oxford University Press, ELT Promotions, Walton St., Oxford OX2 6DP; telephone [0865] 56767). ***Drama series*** *with a variety of stories and sketches. Functional syllabus. Supplement to Grapevine or any course for beginners. 16 × three-minute units.*

This series (and *Family Affair*, described below) are examples of a trend in which publishers produce videos to accompany successful print series. Some of the short units are much more successful than others, and one general advantage of the format is that a teacher can choose what to use. Price: two videotapes, £70 each.

***3. Adults: high-beginning and intermediate levels.*** *The Lost Secret* (1987–1988, BBC English [see address above]). *Drama serial. Mystery/thriller about a scientist who has lost his memory. Structural/functional syllabus. Two tapes: 11 × thirteen-minute episodes.*

A man has lost his memory. The investigation to recover his past uncovers a sinister plot. . . . A strong story line and good acting make this serial compelling viewing. Price: £100 (PAL); £150 (NTSC). For a review, see *Small Screen, 2*(1), March 1989.

***4. Teenagers: high-beginning and intermediate levels.*** *Impact* (1987, Macmillan ELT Division, Macmillan Publishers, Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire RG21 2XS; telephone [0256] 29242). *Edited authentic material from tv school broadcasts. Mixed format divided into very short units. Functional/structural syllabus. One 60-minute tape.*

*Impact* is the first and best example of exploiting authentic materials for classroom use. Price: £75 (NTSC or PAL).

***5. Adults: intermediate level.*** *Family Affair* (1984, Longman ELT, Longman House, Burnt Mill, Harlow, Essex CM20 2JE; telephone [0279] 26721). *Drama serial. A divorced architect, her ex-husband and her son caught up in a mystery in London. Structural/functional syllabus corresponding to Building Strategies. Two tapes: 15 × three- to six-minute episodes.*

*Family Affair* is a spinoff of the successful *Strategies* book series (Abbs & Freebairn, 1977, 1979). A very clever script (by Paula Milne) and all the elements of a good drama—good acting, lighting, and atmospheric music—make the series as entertaining for native speakers as it is for English language learners. Price: Programs 1 and 2, £75 each (NTSC or PAL).

*6.* ***Adults: advanced level.*** *Newsbrief* (1988-, Newsbrief, Olympia Quay, 70 Russell Rd., London W14 8YL; telephone [01] 602 9333). *Authentic tv documentary material. Monthly compilation of BBC news items, with linking commentary. Teachers' notes for some items prepared by British Council. One 60-minute tape each month.*

*Newsbrief* represents the shape of things to come (if one can afford it). Although not primarily designed for the ELT market, *Newsbrief* provides a wealth of generally engaging material, with worksheets (for somewhat less than half the video material) that require little further preparation. Price: approximately £450 for an annual subscription. For reviews, see *Small Screen, 1*(3), September 1988; and *EFL Gazette, 100,* April 1988.

7. ***Adults: advanced level; English for science and technology.*** *The Carsat Crisis* (1986–1987, BBC English [see address above]). *Drama serial about a crisis in space. English for science and technology. Functional syllabus. Two tapes: 13 × fifteen-minute episodes.*

*The Carsat Crisis* is an English for specific purposes video with sophisticated content likely to engage its intended audience. Price: £200 (PAL); £300 (NTSC). For a review, see *Small Screen, 1*(3), September 1988.

*8.* ***Adults: all levels.*** *Speak Easy* (1982, BBC English, distributed in the United States by Longman Publishing Group [see addresses above]). *Mime sketches featuring a variety of service and social situations (e.g., having a meal in a restaurant, getting medical attention, asking for help from a stranger, making friends). Functional syllabus. One tape: 14 × three to four-minute units.*

*Speak Easy,* which is very functional as a resource for the teacher, represents a limited but very valid use of the medium. Price: £50 (PAL, from BBC); $179 (NTSC, from Longman). For reviews, see *ELT Journal, 40*(2), 1986; and *Studies in Language Learning, 5*(1), Spring 1985.

### *Teacher-Training Videos*
### *Dean Brodkey*

The field of teacher-training videotapes is quite distinct from that of classroom ESL instructional videotapes. Unlike ESL classroom materials, teacher-training videotapes are most often produced locally on a minimal budget, intended for use by a single professor in classes on ESL/EFL methods, or by an ESL school program that employs novice teachers.

Few are listed commercially for widespread sale. They may be filmed quickly with amateur equipment and spliced together in a semiprofessional way. Very few teacher-training videotapes are prepared as high-priced, broadcast-quality courses for teachers. Moreover, tapes for "teacher training" may include not only teaching techniques and classroom scenes but topics in sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics, culture studies, or political issues.

Tracking down existing videotapes has been a laborious process because so few are catalogued. In fact, the whole concept of teacher-training videos is so unfamiliar that they are commonly confused with classroom materials for ESL learners. A further point of confusion lies in the fact that for many professors who are teacher trainers, video is a medium for on-the-spot taping of novice teachers for the purposes of self-study and individual criticism. Yet "prepared" videotapes exist.

Of the 150 videotapes listed in the current *Bibliography of Teacher Training Videos for TESOL* (Brodkey, 1990), I have seen no more than 20. There is as yet no accepted system of submitting prepared videotapes for review, and often the price of obtaining a videotape copy is prohibitive.

Generally, the quality of teacher-training videotapes ranges from fully professional, broadcast-quality efforts to amateur, unedited footage. However, unlike ESL classroom materials, they may be of considerable use to the teacher trainer in spite of technical flaws.

Novice teachers appear to be very tolerant of unprofessional camera work, poor color, or poor exposure as long as the image is in focus and steady. However, the sound track must be clearly audible, especially when picking up weak student voices. There is also a preference for edited videotapes of not more than 30 or 40 minutes in length and for quite explicit voice-over and chart-like "principles" inserted into the format. Moreover, trainees demand clearly outstanding model teachers and are noticeably impatient and critical of "average" teachers and classrooms.

Several factors influence the state of the art in teacher-training videos. On the one hand, a worldwide demand for ESL teacher training is evident, often in the remotest areas where typical university courses are inappropriate or impossible to provide. Videos can fill such a gap, but they must be appropriate to an extraordinarily wide variety of classroom situations, replete with ethnic and linguistic diversity, age level and educational level differences, and varied English needs.

Future efforts should include production of teacher-training videotapes that extend the coverage of types of classes, from preschool ESL through elementary school, high school, university, and adult classes, and a greater variety of specific ethnic settings, both ESL and EFL, worldwide. There are enormous opportunities for teacher trainers to make such films inexpensively and with wider distribution to interested audiences. As observed in the section on classroom videos, American teacher-training productions predominate in the specialized *Bibliography* but are generally inferior in technical quality to British or Canadian efforts. American teacher-training videos tend to feature less polished model teachers and are notably weak in video technique, yet they may cover philosophical approaches and teaching activities, such as whole language for young children, bilingual education, or content-area language teaching, not available elsewhere. Again, the preponderance of American videos deal with the adult classroom, and much needs to be provided for lower-school teachers.

The 1992 TESOL convention in Vancouver revealed a striking increase in the number of new, professional-quality teacher-training videos available, though older tapes continue to be useful and often unique. The following descriptions feature only a few examples; they do not constitute a preferred list.

***1. An ESL Center in Action*** (formerly *The Second-Language Experience*). (Patricia Richard-Amato, 1981, 161 Calle Mayor, Redondo Beach, CA 90277; telephone [213] 375–4788.) *Techniques for teaching second languages demonstrated: peer teaching, Lozanov methodology, music, total physical response, cultural awareness activities, etc. One 30-minute tape.*

This somewhat dated video is an American high school example with considerable merit. In a high school setting in Colorado with primarily Southeast Asian refugees, Richard-Amato demonstrates an entire schoolwide approach including many of the "innovative methodologies" of the 1970s and 1980s, peer teaching, and heavy emphasis on affective activities. An interview format and voice-over are used to emphasize principles. Although the technical quality of the film is quite poor, with faded color but adequate sound, teacher trainees are regularly impressed and positive in their responses. An additional benefit is Richard-Amato's textbook, *Making it Happen* (1988), which essentially reiterates and elaborates on the program shown in the film. Price (video): $10 in the United States; $15 outside the United States.

*2. **Multiracial Britain*** (formerly *Cross Talk*). (1979, BBC, now distributed by Films Inc., Public Media Inc., 5547 Ravenswood Ave., Chicago, IL 60640; telephone [800] 323–4222 or [312] 878–2600, ext. 211. This title does not appear in the distributor's catalogue but is available by special order.) *Shows sociolinguistic barriers in English-Pakistani interactions in Britain. One 30-minute tape.*

An older BBC film produced in collaboration with the American sociolinguist John Gumperz, this video illustrates linguistic and cultural communication breakdowns between English and Pakistani workers. Although it is not a classroom film and the setting is indelibly British, the message is highly appropriate for ESL teacher trainees in America. The videotape is broadcast quality and includes voice-over, interviews, and animated charts of language for analysis. Price: $129.

*3. **Teacher Training Through Videos: ESL Techniques.*** (1992, K. Lynn Savage and Leann Howard, Longman Publishing Group, 95 Church Street, White Plains, NY 10601.) This new American release consists of 10 videos for teachers of adult and secondary school students in ESL–adult basic education programs. Sample lessons are available before purchase.

The lesson I saw, "Information Gap," focused on a valuable technique in communicative language teaching. Moreover, the unrehearsed quality of the scenes gives a lively taste of what really goes on in an ESL class. However, the demonstration teacher and the audio and visual quality leave a good deal to be desired in terms of technical adequacy and professional polish.

*4. **ESL Teaching Techniques.*** (1992, Faith Fernald, Access Network, The Alberta Educational Communications Corp., 295 Midpark Way, SE, Alberta, Canada T2X2A8.) A series of 18 10-minute videos for the teacher of adult ESL learners. Free preview copies are available on request.

The segment I viewed at the 1992 TESOL convention illustrated "Making the Most of a Guest Speaker." The technical quality is exceptional, featuring teacher-talk frames in windows within the larger frame of the classroom scenes. The content and advice to the teacher are excellent, fresh, and usable.

5. ***English Teaching with Video.*** (Barry Tomalin with the BBC, distributed through Audio-Forum, 96 Broad Street, Guilford, CT 06437.) Ten techniques for viewing a videotape with a class of ESL learners.

A thoroughly professional 30-minute video, it shows a teacher using various episodes from BBC ESL films to focus on communicative language prediction, kinesics, information gap practice, and exercises based on other observable details in the videotapes. A teacher's guide and book, *Video in Action,* is available from Audio-Forum.

This very brief review necessarily overlooks numerous valuable teacher-training videos in the *Bibliography,* including many older as well as new ones.

## Future Directions

Producers of ELT videos have in many cases tried to achieve too much with the limited resources at their disposal. They have often looked to entertainment television, with its mass market and immense resources, for their models. The soap opera format in particular is extremely demanding for scriptwriters, who must sustain interest in a small set of characters over many episodes, each with its own climax. The task becomes infinitely more demanding when the scriptwriter is also working with limited language. Additionally, the soap opera format demands good actors and sophisticated filming.

We should expect the same standards of audio and video clarity on ELT video that we see on entertainment television. After all, we would certainly complain if the type were fuzzy in a textbook. Small budgets, however, should lead more ELT video producers to look to less expensive models of format and content. Two examples are the short documentary (such as *Communicating Survival,* described above) and series of short sketches (such as *American Scenes* and *Grapevine,* described above).

Because television came before video, it is not surprising that the field of ELT video that is not initially conceived for broadcast is only beginning to establish a distinct identity. As mentioned in several of the descriptions of videos, many broadcast series originally designed for self-study have been repackaged for the classroom. Because of this, and because of the relatively small number of international ELT videos produced so far, the distinctions between broadcast and nonbroadcast and between self-study and classroom videos are blurred in this chapter.

There are, however, crucial differences between the features of these two media and between the priorities of their markets. Even if a video release is planned from the outset, the producer of ELT materials designed for broadcast must consider a viewer who may see the transmission only once and who will have minimal control over its delivery. Video not designed for broadcast allows much greater flexibility. Similarly, video for the classroom does not need to be as narrowly focused as video for self-study.

The interaction between these variables can be expressed graphically in this way:

Viewer's control over the medium
and mediation between material and learner

less ——————————————————→ more

| broadcast materials | video for self-study | video for the classroom |
|---|---|---|

The greater the user's control over the medium and the greater the mediation between the material and the learner (usually by a teacher), the less the medium has to carry the pedagogical message and, therefore, the denser the material can be in all other respects. For example, a beginning-level video for the classroom can be linguistically more advanced than one for self-study because the teacher can provide additional help. Similarly, story lines and situations can be more ambiguous and complex. So, although it is appropriate (and perhaps inevitable) for the video component of a multimedia television series to be the main vehicle of the syllabus, it is often inappropriate for the video to take this role in the classroom. The classroom teacher is more likely to want to use video as another, admittedly very rich, resource to supplement a variety of other resources.

Moreover, precisely because teachers (and program administrators) equate video with other resources such as books and audiotapes, the purchase of video series at current prices rarely seems cost effective. Classroom video materials must therefore be made on a very limited budget, but at the same time they should be richer in language and situation than broadcast and self-study materials.

One solution to this conundrum—as many people have discovered—is to adapt native-speaker materials. We have mentioned *Newsbrief* (which, however, is expensive) and *Impact*, and a few other adaptations are available. There should be a very large increase in the number of such adaptations and reinterpretations of native-speaker materials, such as commercials and feature films (many of them captioned) in a variety of magazine formats. In many cases, there is no need for these to be overtly didactic, and indeed it may be a hindrance.

Copyright is at present a major barrier to the use and adaptation of native-speaker materials. The informative videotape *Copyright: What Every School, College and Public Library Should Know* ($15 from the Association for Information Media and Equipment, 420 Academy Dr., Northbrook, IL 60062; or Coronet Video, telephone [800] 621-2131) vividly illustrates the casual way teachers routinely use pirated off-air copies of broadcast materials, unaware that this use can be a serious violation of copyright law and a cause for legal prosecution. A language school in England recently settled out of court for £71,000 following prosecution for video copyright infringement (Dent, 1990).

Nevertheless, relatively cheap and entirely legal ways to use some native-speaker video materials are likely to be found. In such cases, the ELT production budget will no longer have to be spent (as so often now) on a doomed attempt to reproduce the high production values of feature films and network television. Instead, the money can be devoted to effectively selecting and exploiting the raw material. Lower costs should make it possible for smaller organizations to produce good materials.

Whether or not the field comes to be dominated by such adaptations, a large proportion of ELT videos that are intended for the classroom and that do not use native-speaker materials will be tied to successful print series (along the lines of *Family Affair*, described above) or will be videos for specific purposes (such as the *Communicating Survival* series, described above). Large-scale broadcast and self-study series will continue to be made, and remade, to suit the latest fashions. They will also continue to be more or less overtly didactic, but here too non-ELT footage may be repackaged. There will continue to be some market in the classroom for the most innovative and affordable of these videos.

We draw attention in passing to the tremendous number of videos and television broadcasts produced for strictly local markets (Lonergan, 1990), a trend that will continue.

A number of dramatic changes in video technology are on the horizon. By law, all television sets sold in the United States after July 1993 will have to be equipped with a built-in closed-caption decoder. This law should lead, at last, to the widespread use of captioned video in English language teaching in the United States. Later rather than sooner, captioned video and the widespread availability of videodisc may reduce even further the demand for ELT video materials filmed for that purpose from the ground up. As soon as videodisc replaces videotape, the potential of video in language teaching will increase dramatically (oh, for a video dictionary in every classroom!). The problems of taking advantage of that potential on a limited budget will remain.

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# III

# PRODUCING VIDEO

# 9

# NOTES FROM AN OLDE-TYME PRODUCER OF LANGUAGE VIDEOTAPES

***Elliot S. Glass,*** **Queensborough Community College, City University of New York**

During the past 25 years I have produced language videotapes for my Spanish and English as a second language (ESL) classes, for broadcast television, and for commercial and institutional use. The videos were designed for a broad range of courses: from beginning- to advanced-level classes, from career-oriented classes to cultural and literature seminars. Some were produced using only language students and portable equipment; others employed seasoned professional actors and camera crews. They were shot on the streets of large and small cities, in studios, in classrooms, in hospitals, at airports, in homes, at cultural events, in public parks, in nursing homes, at political rallies, and in theaters. A few were produced with grant money; most were financed by my teaching salary. A few have been in constant use since 1969; most have been in use since 1980. Their quality varies greatly, ranging from the award-winning *El Político Honesto* series (1979) (a spoof on the Watergate affair), which was aired on KPBS television, to students' interviews with residents in the *barrios* in New York, and from the *American Scenes ESL* series (1985), selected as the first American English series for broadcast in the People's Republic of China, to mock game shows shot in my ESL classroom.

As one who thinks visually, I love to work and play with video. I see language videos simply as an extension of my teaching, as audiovisual materials that enliven my classes and make teaching more enjoyable.

The videos I produced vary in content and format but fall into two basic categories. The first consists of *student-produced language videos*, which involve the learners of the second or foreign language in making the videos. Students gain exposure to the spoken language by interviewing native speakers. The emphasis is on developing survival skills and improving aural comprehension of the spoken language. The students, armed with preconceived questions and a microphone, feel in command and therefore at ease. Gradually the interviewee asks questions of the interviewer, and the students are drawn into a dialogue without being entirely aware that they are carrying on a discussion. When the students view the videotape, they gain confidence and become more aware of words, phrases, patterns, and structures studied in class. In short, the interviewing technique bolsters self-confidence and motivates learning.

I first became involved with student-produced language videos in 1969, when I purchased a Sony Portapack and took five or six students in my intermediate-level Spanish language courses into various neighborhoods in New York City where the target language was spoken. Before going into a particular neighborhood, the students had decided what questions they wished to ask and I had contacted a local resident to set up a time and place for the interviews. I had asked the local contact to tell the interviewees to engage the students in conversation as soon as the students finished their questions. At the site I operated the camera, and the students took turns interviewing. All those who were interviewed were invited to the viewing of the video (sometimes in the classroom, sometimes in a community facility). When the videos were played back, students who did not conduct interviews were given a chance to ask questions of the interviewees present. These interviews were also videotaped.

When the videos were replayed, students watched intently as they saw themselves responding in the target language. Some focused on their pronunciation, some on a word or phrase of which they were not sure, and some on how well they felt they did relative to their colleagues. Everyone was eagerly involved and could hardly wait until the class was off to another neighborhood.

Since those early days of portable video cameras, more and more instructors have found creative and stimulating ways to involve students in videotaping inside and outside the classroom. Some common classroom videotaping exercises produce the following programs:

- mock soap operas based on current television soap operas
- evening news and weather programs based on current newspaper reports
- game shows based on current television game shows
- "man on the street" interviews on current events or issues
- "event coverage documentaries" on events that take place during national holidays
- celebrity interview programs using students and instructors as celebrities
- sports coverage or film criticism programs
- impromptu skits based on a theme or situation.

These productions require only a portable video cassette recorder and the good will of the students and the instructor. They are inexpensive and relatively easy to carry out because they involve essentially only the instructor and the members of the class. The only preproduction planning may be contacting outside participants, such as interviewees. The production itself involves small, manageable groups, and there is no postproduction editing. The productions take minimal expense and yield maximum results.

As the years went on and new generations of more sophisticated portable video equipment came on the market, I became more adventuresome and foolhardy. I began to produce videos in the second category: ***teacher-produced videotapes***. These videos, which do not involve students in their production, require learner participation during and after their viewing. Teacher-produced videotapes need elaborate preproduction planning, many people, and extensive postproduction editing. In short, teacher-produced videos mean big budgets and many headaches. Outlined below are the three stages of production for teacher-produced videos.

## Preproduction Planning

Preproduction planning is usually the most time consuming of the three stages. During this stage the producer-director decides on the following elements:

1. the level (beginning, intermediate, or advanced)
2. whether to use workbooks and what kind to use. If there is no workbook, you must decide how to integrate the visual materials in a way that involves the students. If there is a workbook, you must decide how to coordinate the written text with the visual material presented.
3. the format. Some sample formats are (a) introduction (talking head) followed by a skit, questions and answers, a replay of the skit, and more questions and answers; (b) an explanation (talking head or visuals) followed by a live interview, questions, and a flashback to the answers; and (c) a skit followed by a visual presentation of words on the screen, two replays of the aural-visual presentation of words on the screen, and a quiz.

Choosing the appropriate format is crucial to the success of the videotape. Careful thought must be given to the presentation of the material, the number of replays, and the degree of involvement expected from the students. Repetition is a key to language acquisition, and the more ways you visually and aurally present the same words, structures, and patterns, the more effective the videotape will be.

The format can be presented on a storyboard on which you sketch the action and sequencing of both the video image and the audio track. The storyboard in Figure 1 illustrates how format (b) above might appear. Storyboards are guides, not absolute blueprints. They allow you to see what might or might not work visually, and it is here that adjustments should be made if possible. As will become apparent, the producer-director's art is imprecise at best and contains a myriad of variables. When you can eliminate possibilities, it is important to do so.

At the preproduction stage you also make decisions regarding actors, releases, props and locations, and permits.

### *Actors and Releases*

Whether your production features colleagues or professional actors, it is best to have all actors sign a release form. (The form in Appendix 9A serves as a sample.) You can never anticipate what might occur either in a studio or on location. Accidents are always waiting to happen when you work with lights and video equipment. After the production, you never know how participants will feel if they know you are gaining

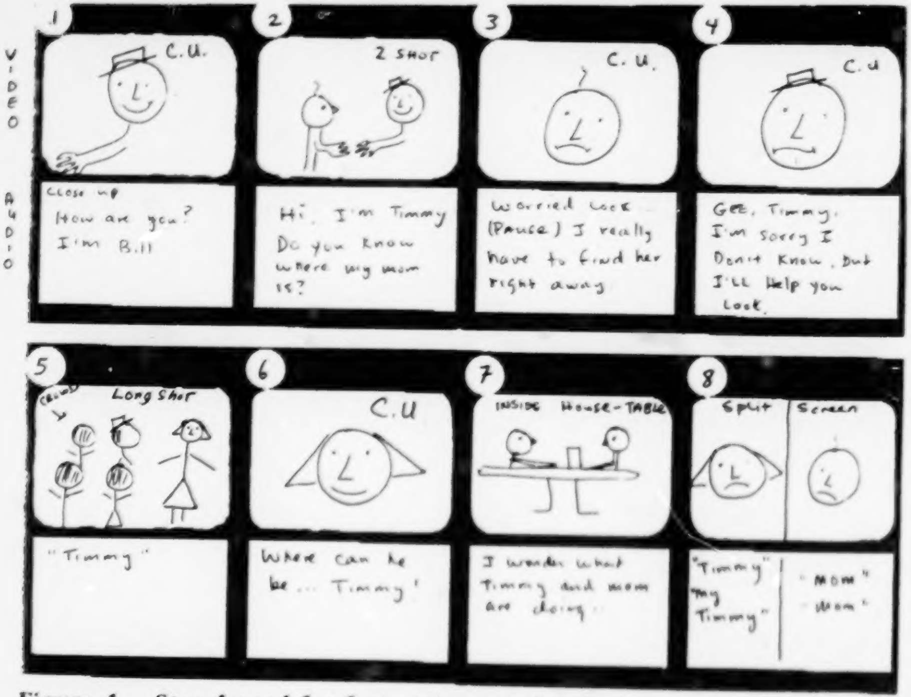
VIDEO
AUDIO
1
C.U.
Close up
How are you? I'm Bill
2
2 SHOT
Hi, I'm Timmy
Do you know where my mom is?
3
C.U.
Worried look...
(Pause) I really have to find her right away.
4
C.U
Gee, Timmy, I'm sorry I don't know, but I'll help you look.
5
(Crowd)
Long Shot
"Timmy"
6
C.U
Where can he be... Timmy!
7
INSIDE House-TABLE
I wonder what Timmy and mom are doing.
8
Split
Screen
"Timmy"
"My Timmy"
"MOM"
"Mom"

Figure 1. Storyboard for formatting a videotape.

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recognition or income on what they regard as the merits of their talents. The release clarifies matters from the start: It says that you intend to make an educational video but that the video may become commercial, in which case you will or will not share profits. If you work with professional actors, you must decide whether to hire Screen Actors' Guild or other unionized actors or to employ nonunion professionals.

Also a consideration is whether to use only actors with standard Midwestern pronunciation or to employ locals with pronounced regional accents. Certainly, the producer-director should be sensitive to issues of gender and ethnicity so that the video reflects the American cultural mosaic rather than an idealized or stereotypical configuration placed in the 1950s.

### *Props and Location*

Whether to use a studio or to shoot on location has both aesthetic and financial pros and cons. Studio costs range from hundreds to thousands of dollars per hour, depending on the number of cameras and the size of the crew. Studios are preferable when you want to make sure the audio and video will be nearly perfect. A studio is a controlled environment, and that means quality. However, there are limits to what can be done in a studio. An indoor setting, such as people in a living room, is fine in a studio, but you still must have props made or move them into the studio.

Shooting on location can be less expensive and more authentic. The same scene shot in someone's living room may cost half the price of the studio shoot. On the other hand, you need time to set up the lights, and someone's living room is not a controlled environment. Telephones and doorbells ring at the wrong time, noise from the refrigerator or fluorescent lights in the next room is picked up easily, and natural light and reflection from glass often cause difficulty.

### *Permits*

When videotaping on location in public and private places, you may need city or private permits. Quite often producers do not bother to obtain a permit, and nobody cares until someone sees the program and asks, "Did they have a permit to shoot there?" It may take a few hours to secure a permit, but the time is well spent compared with the time, money, and energy required to extricate yourself once a corporation or the city legal department begins issuing inquiries.

## Production

The production phase is usually the shortest and the most hectic phase. During production, what can go wrong usually does.

### *Crew and Equipment*

You do not need to become an expert in videotaping before beginning production, but you must know what your equipment can and cannot accomplish. You should always discuss with the technical director and the crew the details of the storyboard. If you do not, you may discover on the day of the shoot that it is impossible to videotape some of the scenes the way you have sketched them. Video crews work by the hour, and every hour spent planning on location can cut the project short, especially if the budget is tight. To ask the right questions when you meet with the technical people, you must become somewhat familiar with the capabilities and limitations of the equipment—in short, learn what you can do before, not during, the shoot.

A compatible technical director and crew are essential to the success of a project. A technical person who is eager to control more than the technical end of the production should not be hired. The producer-director must be able to call the shots and have the technicians follow orders. There should be only one director; nothing leads to poor quality faster than having more than one person giving directions to the technicians. In their attempts to please multiple masters, they will invariably make mistakes, which will create the need for retakes. Retakes make actors less effective and drain the energies of everyone involved.

### *Language Prompter*

The production of language videos requires a language prompter who makes sure the actors read their lines accurately. Many actors are accustomed to ad libbing or changing the script if they forget a line. This practice is almost always tolerated, but changes in words, phrases, and tenses may be unacceptable in language videos. Because the director must concentrate on a myriad of logistical and technical considerations, it is the sole responsibility of the language prompter to ensure strict adherence to the script. At times, however, ad libbing makes a dialogue more natural and fits perfectly into the lesson; then the language prompter should allow the change. Deviations may mean that workbook materials need to be rewritten, and language prompters should be familiar with the materials so that they can judge on the spot whether to let the ad lib stand or do a retake. Often it is wise to let the actor continue and to reshoot the scene, noting that there are two versions of the scene. Although costly, reshooting allows the director to defer final judgment until later.

Another common problem is that some actors accustomed to working only on stage project their voices in a manner incompatible with videotaping. Making voice levels consistent and ensuring that actors speak clearly may take some coaching before going to the studio or on location.

### *Floor Manager*

On location or in the studio, time is money and organization is the key to keeping expenses low. The floor manager is in charge of organization, from supervising makeup to keeping the actors and crew fed and in good spirits. A good *esprit de corps* can save money and make the long hours of retakes bearable. A sense of humor is important, and sensitivity to the needs of the actors and crew cannot be underscored enough. The floor manager sets the tone for the atmosphere during production.

### *On-Site Video Playback*

To test technical quality and to view the overall effect of scenes just shot, the producer-director often asks for a playback. The producer-director should view the tape with the language prompter and the technical director. If there is a problem related to blocking or the delivery of an actor, the actor might be called to view it as well. The playback should not be viewed by the entire cast and crew because such communal viewings tend to relax people. A certain level of tension is necessary for "takes" to be successful.

### *Contingency Plans*

The producer-director and the floor manager should always have contingency plans in the event that key personnel do not arrive or a location or prop cannot be used. The technical director should come equipped with backup equipment and a portable generator to meet the technical contingencies that invariably arise.

## Postproduction

In postproduction you see the discrepancy between what you hoped to shoot (that is, what was on the storyboard) and what in fact was shot. It is here that the program takes on its final visual configuration.

### *Safety Copy*

Either at the close of each shooting day or at the end of the entire shoot, you must make a backup or safety copy of everything that was videotaped, using high-quality, professional 1-inch videotape and state-of-the-art equipment. This second set of videotapes will replace the camera-original videotapes if they are damaged. Camera originals are not frequently damaged, but it does happen even in the best of editing studios. Malfunctioning editing machines can crease tapes, put on unwanted color washes, and do no end of harm to a videotape before anyone realizes what is happening. If transferred onto 1-inch videotape, the safety copy replaces the original with almost no generational loss in quality.

### *Rough-Cut Editing*

After the safety copies are made, the camera originals should be copied onto VHS videotapes—with the time code, which provides a digital clock on the video image that tells the editor the number of minutes, seconds, and frames that have elapsed since the start of the videotape. The first task of the producer-director is to view the entire videotape and take general notes on good and bad points. Then the producer-director makes a general editing menu, noting the minute, second, and frame of each edit. (See Appendix 9B for a sample tape log and cue sheet.) For example:

| | *Video* | *Audio* |
|---|---|---|
| In point: 13m, 21s, fr. 16 | man's face | "that's it" |
| Out point: 15m, 2s, fr. 23 | blue sky | no sound |

Both the audio and video in and out points should be noted. The menu corresponds roughly to the storyboard, so it is useful to have it on hand while editing. From the general editing menu you produce a rough-cut edit, that is, an edited videotape that allows you to see the progression of the program before the final edit. Here you can test formats to determine if the information flows the way it should, to see if the visual material holds the viewer's interest, and to check the technical quality of the material.

Testing the effectiveness of the rough-cut edit with a class is always a good idea. What the instructor likes is not necessarily what the class likes or responds to, so at this early stage some feedback from students is important.

The rough-cut edit does not contain any special effects (cuts, fades, dissolves) or any characters (writing on the screen). You will be able to determine the most appropriate special effects and characters after viewing the rough-cut edit several times. At this point you need to make decisions such as what size letters to use for which occasions, how to repeat material in innovative ways, and how to segue from one skit, episode, or flashback to another.

As everything comes together and the overall program begins to emerge, you must decide where to use music and what kind to use. You may have selected something initially, but it is usually not until the end that you are convinced of your initial instinct or realize that you must go in another direction.

After the audio is inserted, the copyright information, titles, and credits are added. The © symbol should be placed before the name(s) of the copyright holders, and a warning about unauthorized copying of the program should also be included. The producer-director should contact the copyright office in Washington, DC, for the appropriate forms for formally copyrighting the program. With the titles and credits added, the videotape is now complete.

## Evaluation

Unlike the enjoyable student-produced videos, teacher-produced videos will be seen and critiqued by both students and colleagues. Because evaluation is based on perspective derived from training and temperament and colored by years of television viewing, you should expect that one-third of the evaluations will be glowing, one third negative or nitpicking, and one-third neutral or noncommittal—the usual ratio for educational materials. In any event, time is the ultimate bestower of success. Meanwhile, enjoy your creation and bask in the recognition of the most important audience in the world: your students.

## References

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*El politico honesto.* (1979). Manhasset, NY: Crossroads Video. San Diego: San Diego State University.

## Appendix 9A: Release Form

In consideration of my interest in educational language programs, I hereby consent to a recording of myself on videotape, audiotape, paper, or otherwise by ______________________ for any proper and legitimate educational or commercial purpose.

I acknowledge your ownership of the ______________________ language programs and further agree that you may use my name, likeness, and biography for the purpose of commercially promoting the program. I warrant and represent that all material furnished by me is my own or that for which I have full authority for such purpose.

I further agree that I shall receive a videotape copy of the program in which I perform as full payment for my participation in the ______________________ language programs.

I hereby forever release and discharge ______________________, the director, and ______________________, the producer, its employees, licensees, agents, successors, and assigns from any claims or interests that I may have in the language programs.

I further state and acknowledge that I am not a member of any association or organization of artists or actors which may have an interest in my participation.

PLEASE PRINT

| | |
|---|---|
| ______________________<br>(name) | ______________________<br>(signature) |
| ______________________<br>(address) | ______________________<br>(date) |
| ______________________ | |

# Appendix 9B: Sample Tape Log and Cue Sheet

## TAPE LOG & CUE SHEET

Date ____________ Title ________________________ Client ________________ Cass. # __________

Length ___________ Prod./Director ___________________

| Scene | Take | Program Information | Scene Starts | | | | | Scene Ends | | | | | Remarks | Take used |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | counter | hrs | min | sec | frm | counter | hrs | min | sec | frm | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
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# 10

# FACTORS AFFECTING THE PRODUCTION OF VIDEO FOR LANGUAGE TEACHING AND LEARNING

*Joe Hambrook*

As a producer of video and television material for language learners and teachers, I am sometimes haunted by a dream in which a man in a bowler hat approaches a British policeman and, speaking very slowly, asks, "Excuse me. Do you speak English as a foreign language?" Receiving no reply, the man produces an enormous notice with the alternatives "Yes, I do," and "No, I don't," written on it. The policeman then turns to the camera, salutes politely, and says, "Now you give the answer.

This scenario, or something like it, could have occurred in the average language-teaching videotape many years ago. Matters have improved, owing largely to the teachers who use video in class. Even so, many teachers prefer so-called "authentic" video and television (i.e., material not produced for language teaching) over material designed specifically for their benefit. In light of this preference, what can a producer of such material contribute to a book for video users?

The context in which professional producers and commercial distributors operate and the issues concerning them provide a basis for assessing video materials made specifically for language teaching. They also suggest a starting point for considering ways of using any kind of video in the language classroom.

I focus in this chapter on professionally produced English-language teaching (ELT) video and television, including that intended primarily for use in the home, as classroom video accounts for a smaller proportion of the total output in this field. I do not consider the production of video within educational institutions even though it is extensive and is the source of most video for teacher training.

## The Context of Video Production and Distribution

### *Producers and Distributors*

First, who are the producers and distributors of language-teaching video and television?

***Broadcasters.*** Several broadcasting organizations (mostly public service institutions funded by license) started making language teaching programs in the early 1960s. For many years they were the only producers involved, and they are still the largest source of such material.

These organizations produce and broadcast their own material locally, usually as part of an educational service (e.g., for schools, for adults, within distance learning systems) but sometimes as part of their general program output. They include NHK in Japan, the Scandinavian public service stations, and the regional stations in Germany. Some distribute material more widely, often on a commercial basis, but ELT programming forms a relatively insignificant element of their overseas distributing and marketing efforts.

Perhaps surprisingly, the best known producer-distributor, BBC English, hardly belongs in this category at all. For more than 25 years its television and video output has been a commercial offshoot of the BBC's external radio broadcast services, funded by means of its own revenues and by various forms of sponsorship and coproduction. BBC English does not broadcast directly on television, and it distributes video through a worldwide network of agents.

***Publishers.*** For many years educational textbook publishers have collaborated with broadcasters producing language-teaching programs, but today most large publishers make their own video material, which they sell through the same channels they use to sell their other products.

Publishers of educational products sold directly to the public (e.g., door-to-door, by mail order) sometimes produce their own video material, particularly for large consumer markets in the Far East. Probably more language-teaching video has been distributed by this means than through regular retail outlets, even if some was originally produced by broadcasters and publishers.

***Other producers and distributors.*** Major national agencies concerned with language teaching (e.g., the British Council, the United States Information Agency, the Goethe Institut) are occasionally involved in television and video production, though they favor collaborating with established producers, publishers, and distributors. Of several independent producers who have entered the field, some undertake their own distribution, but they usually rely on those experienced in the specialized market served by language-teaching video.

Educational institutions that produce video for their own internal use sometimes aim for wider distribution, but their products seldom reach adequate technical standards for this purpose. However, the production and use of video within institutions on a purely local basis is likely to constitute a growing proportion of the total effort devoted to language-teaching video.

## *Users*

Who are the users of language-teaching video, and in what context do they use it?

At present, language learners use video at home or in an institutional context, though in the future it may be possible to use video while traveling (e.g., on aircraft and sea ferries, in coaches and at airports).

At home, the dominance of mainstream television and of video bought or rented for entertainment significantly affects the use of the medium for language learning. Video and television hardware in most homes is not located in an environment conducive to serious study. For some this situation is bound to change as domestic electronic communication systems become more common. Indeed, it is diverting to speculate how differently television and video might have been integrated into our lives if they had been predated by personal computers and other emerging elements of interactive media.

These observations are admittedly part of a somewhat fanciful scenario in which foreign language acquisition includes not only a commitment to serious study but also elements of mass appeal and casual encounter with the target language (e.g., by watching foreign language movies or newscasts on television). They are worth mentioning here because video and television in the home can often serve the needs of language learners most effectively by increasing their confidence and reinforcing what they have acquired through other means.

The increasingly sophisticated use of video in the classroom is dealt with in other chapters, and its demands, elsewhere in this chapter. In addition, the use of video in self-access systems within institutions opens up a challenging range of possibilities that is similar in many respects to video-based learning at home.

### *Resources*

The resources available for the production and use of video influence decisions that affect the attitudes of producers and the content of the materials produced. Professionally produced language-teaching video is generally underfunded, a fact that is reflected in the poor technical and creative quality of much of the material. Indeed, one of the main attractions of so-called "authentic" television and video is that it clearly benefits from the time, money, and creative expertise spent on it.

With the exception of BBC English, broadcasting organizations are not commercially accountable in the manner of publishers. Nevertheless, the budgets allocated to most television language-teaching projects are pitifully small, and the staff involved do not enjoy a high status in their profession. Not surprisingly, therefore, the results seldom compare favorably with mainstream television programs.

Video produced by and for publishers suffers in the same way. Publishers are not traditionally accustomed to the kind of investment risks that video production and distribution demand, so they understandably tend to sell inexpensive solutions to often resource-hungry requirements. Publishers can hedge their bets by producing video material to accompany textbook-based courses that are already commercial successes, but they often retain the attitude, "How little can we make this for?", which seriously affects quality.

Fortunately, many aspects of video production are becoming more flexible and relatively less costly. At the same time, the increasing use of video has led to a corresponding increase in video sales, so that publishers are more confident about extending the range and variety of their video output.

From the customers' point of view, what matters are the cost and the availability of both video material and the equipment to use it. Costs have fallen dramatically since the advent of home and classroom video. (In 1980, 15 hours of BBC English's *Follow Me* [1979] cost £2,500; 10 years later it cost £400.) Educational video is still expensive, however (often costing more than £100 per hour, or about $180), and few institutions have sufficient equipment for teachers to prepare and use it effectively. And the more video that is available, the more time teachers need to select and prepare what they are going to use in class.

Finally, in an increasingly important field of video use, the customer is becoming the producer. Video camera-recorders are inexpensive and easy to operate, so that anyone concerned with the allocation of time and money for institutional video must give serious consideration to the advantages of in-house production to satisfy at least some language-teaching requirements.

## The Video Material

What do learners and teachers receive from the producers of language-teaching video and television?

Almost every format found in other fields of video and television has been followed or adapted in language-teaching video, though lack of funds often results in rather pale refections of the original models. Some of the material (especially that made for television) has been ostensively didactic, with demonstrations of individual language items occasionally accompanied by attempts to engage learners in various kinds of interaction with the screen. Such an approach is seldom appropriate for classroom exploitation and is often ineffective and tedious.

With the gradual emergence of a methodology for using video in class, or at least the acceptance of various techniques for active viewing and other video-related tasks, more attention is now being paid to classroom exploitation of video. Videos are often quite short or amenable to being dealt with in very short segments. Some have been found suitable in this respect almost by chance. The format of *Follow Me* (1979), for instance, was determined by constraints relating to the television requirements of the BBC's coproduction partners. The result happened to come in brief segments that could be exploited constructively in the classroom.

At the same time, there have been significant developments in the materials that accompany video. Since the earliest years of video, broadcasters have published written and audio support materials for their language-teaching programs. Gradually the support has increased in extent and complexity as the classroom use of video has grown. Transcripts of dialogue are now a regular feature of almost all video-related packages; simple notes for teachers have become teachers' manuals that sometimes form the largest textbook component of what can reasonably claim to be multimedia courses. Video, as the most costly medium involved, is usually treated as the prime element in a multimedia package, but several textbooks come with a companion video, which is usually short and suitable for use independent of the main course. *Family Affair* (1984), designed as a companion to one of Longman's *Strategies* series (1979), was one of the earliest examples of such a video supplement to an already popular textbook course.

The most obvious feature of the video material itself is the tyranny of the target language. Stories, sketches, interviews, and events of every sort are manipulated to present a foreign language for the supposed benefit of a serious, or relatively serious, student. In fact, language learners seem to be extremely tolerant of such material even if it is both artificial and inferior to what they are used to watching regularly on television. (I must admit, however, that the quality of domestic television in many countries is very poor.) Attempts to avoid this impression may be attractive to native speakers of English, but with few exceptions language-teaching video turns out to be a blend of ineffective teaching material and bad television or video. No wonder teachers often turn away from language-teaching video in favor of "authentic" material copied from television broadcasts or bought through retail video outlets.

## Producers and Their Concerns

Who are the professional producers of language-teaching video, and what are their special concerns?

### Producers

First, who is likely to be involved in producing a language-teaching video? The video may originate from a course design provided by a language-teaching specialist with no direct experience in video production; it may be scripted by an equally inexperienced writer of textbooks, or by a professional scriptwriter, or by the two working together; and somewhere during its development and production it will rely on the professional skills of people like directors, actors, editors, and others who may have no experience in language teaching (though, as native speakers, they may have strong ideas about their own language and how to present it on screen).

What, then, is meant by the term "producer"? For the purposes of this chapter, it refers to the person or persons mainly responsible for the content, format, and pedagogical approach of the material concerned and for completing it by an agreed date and at an agreed cost. As already indicated, normally a team or collection of individuals is involved at various stages of the production, but generally a single person (or perhaps two people) has overall responsibility for the work of the others and for the quality of the results.

### Some Practical Concerns

Certain practical issues take up much of the producer's time and energy. The producer likely not only has to perform miracles within a limited budget but has to consider the demands of sponsors, publishers, coproducers, and other partners. In addition, the producer faces the even greater challenge of reconciling the often conflicting interests of members of the production team itself. The lack of understanding between media professionals and language-teaching professionals can come as a shock to all concerned (except those too insensitive to be aware of it), and the producer has to turn a potentially damaging divergence of attitudes into a collaborative, creative force.

Producers also have to look after the interests of the target group for whom the material is intended. This need may seem obvious, but it can be surprisingly difficult to fulfill when a producer is working with a production team whose members are unaware of what works well or badly for language learning (e.g., in terms of humor and the pacing of action and dialogue) or who are not sensitive to the potential appeal or offensiveness of subject matter in the context of worldwide distribution.

Among all the compromises involved, producers sometimes have to make choices whose consequences on the screen may not please many of the teachers who are likely to use their video material. Nevertheless, at least they can have a clear idea of those consequences and relate them to an equally clear picture of the target group.

Another practical concern, which seldom receives enough attention, relates to fitting the video component into a multimedia course or package. This concern is too often turned into a minor irritation when it should be a matter for creative thinking at the outset and for close attention throughout production.

### *Some Language-Teaching Issues*

A producer of language-teaching video does not deserve to survive if the product cannot deliver a substantial benefit in language-learning terms, however much the video looks like good television or however authentic it appears to a native speaker.

Luckily, there have been enough success stories in the field (using a wide variety of video styles) for producers today to feel free to move away from merely presenting identifiable items of language and features of behavior in an obviously structured and systematic way. However, a number of language teaching–related issues still demand special consideration.

***Authenticity.*** First is the understandable desire for authenticity of language and behavior, accompanied by a revulsion to apparent artificiality. After all, it is claimed, the teacher wants to work with real language and behavior on the screen.

The question of authenticity may not be quite what it seems at first. All video and television material manifests a degree of control over reality. The camera takes in only part of what real-life observers see around them; moreover, it usually intrudes on those events unless they have been set up artificially in the first place. The sound track, if it is to be intelligible, must equally select from a variety of relevant and redundant information. The result must be edited to some extent and often presented at several removes from reality.

"Authentic" television and video may be realistic, lifelike, or utterly convincing in these terms, but it is still authentic *television*, just as *Hamlet* is authentic drama and *Pride and Prejudice* is authentic prose literature. Authentic television and video both control reality somewhere during the production process. Producers of language-teaching video are faced with problems similar to those faced by other television and video producers in deciding how much and what kind of control to exercise.

In the end, the issue of authenticity itself is not complicated even if the preconceptions of some language-teaching professionals make its consideration difficult. In any case, any ideal of authenticity for language-teaching video must also take into account what goes on in classrooms or self-instructional contexts as well as what is presented on the screen. The difficulty for producers of language-teaching material is the need to focus on features that other producers take for granted or take in their stride. For example, decisions about when to show participants as they speak and when to focus on reactions to what they say are particularly important for language learning. Again, speech must be audible (and therefore technically controllable) to a greater degree than on most television programs aimed at native speakers. Indeed, it must be audible in classrooms with poor acoustics, not just in the home or the movie theater.

Such apparently simple matters may lead to unusual approaches to production and editing procedures. For example, the British Council–BBC's *Teaching Observed* (1975), produced more than 15 years ago, was the first documentary film series with sound recorded in stereo—not to obtain a stereo result but the combine flexibility of coverage during filming with precise control of the balance between teacher and student speech during editing to an extent not otherwise technically possible at the time.

A host of similar issues are related to video intended primarily for classroom use. A balance has to be struck between providing materials deliberately designed to be repeated, stopped for use as a still picture (with or without text on the screen), played without sound, and so on, and subject matter attractive enough to engage the attention of students in the first place.

Producers must also consider the extent to which they are meant to provide a model for language and behavior—something unlikely to concern the average mainstream television program maker. For instance, should any of the participants act as surrogates for the language learner? If so, what social, ethnic, cultural, and other constraints have to be considered to make the surrogacy effective and to avoid negative reactions from learners?

Cultural concerns can be particularly troublesome. Video is undoubtedly a powerful instrument for developing learners' awareness of important features of culture and culture-related language use, but attempts to draw attention to such features are not always successful. Making them too obvious renders them unrealistic and even ridiculous, and the desire to ensure culturally appropriate behavior by specifying in detail what that behavior should be puts the wrong kind of strain on the participants in the video, who are used to expressing their cultural identity and articulating its features without detailed prompting. Producers can, however, be attuned to significant cultural features and can handle material sensitively to allow these features to make an impact without undue distortion. Using a checklist during the work in progress is often more effective than attempting to specify cultural details in advance.

Unfortunately, even when the issue of authenticity is dealt with effectively, the potential artificiality of language-teaching video remains a hazard. Producers usually must fit a great deal of content into a limited amount of screen time, convey meanings unequivocally, and find suitable vehicles for language and behavior that is not, after all, entirely natural. As a result, the video all too often includes stereotypes presented unthinkingly or, worse, with a self-conscious air of apology on the part of the producer, as if the stereotypes in question were a disreputable last resort. The most effective way to treat the problem of stereotypes is to use them quite openly for what they offer in the way of comedy or memorability.

***Needs of students and teachers.*** At every point, producers must consider how their video material will respond to the needs of students and teachers. Apart from anything else, it must offer something that "authentic" material lacks. In this respect a particular dilemma arises from the conflict between most producers' impulse to create interesting and challenging material and the unavoidable fact that many teachers still lack confidence and experience in applying the techniques for video presentation recommended elsewhere in this book. In many instances teachers still switch on the video and leave it alone because they are not sure how to use it. If the material demands sophisticated treatment, it is likely to be less attractive when left alone, so that sooner or later it will not even be brought into the classroom. Producers who expect too much of teachers and students may find their products rejected in favor of less challenging language-teaching video or supposedly more appealing "authentic" material.

## The Future

I have incidentally mentioned features here that are likely to change the educational video scene, such as the growing use of "authentic" television and video and the increase in institutionally produced video. To these could be added satellite and cable television and developments in the use of interactive media (e.g., videodisc) for second language learning.

The future is full of exciting challenges that may appear to bypass professionally produced video intended for classroom use, but teachers and students will continue to need carefully designed and competently made video that deals specifically with some of their teaching and learning requirements. Let us hope that the producers concerned will provide an effective and satisfying response.

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## APPENDIX

## A

# GLOSSARY OF VIDEO ACRONYMS AND TECHNICAL TERMS

*audio track*—the recorded sound signal on a videotape.

*Beta (Betamax)*—½-inch videotape format manufactured by Sony.

*dubbing*—copying a videotape.

*fast forward and reverse*—VCR feature allowing the videotape to be moved rapidly with no image visible.

*format*—the type of video cassette, based on the width of the tape; e.g., ½-inch, ¾-inch.

*frame search (memory)*—VCR device allowing the videotape to be returned to a predetermined location.

*freeze frame (still frame)*—a single frame on a videotape displayed as a still image.

*generation*—The original videotape is referred to as the first generation tape; a copy of that is the second generation. A copy of the copy is the third generation, and so forth.

*monitor*—a television screen that can display videotapes from a VCR but cannot receive broadcasts.

*multistandard (monitor or VCR)*—monitor or VCR capable of playing more than one standard.

*NTSC*—National Television Standards Committee, the television and video standard used in the United States, Canada, Mexico, and several countries in Asia and South America. See PAL, SECAM.

*off-air recording*—recording made from broadcast or cable television.

*PAL*—Phase Alternate Line, a television and video standard used in several countries in Africa, Asia, Europe, and South America. See NTSC, SECAM.

*pause*—a VCR device that stops the videotape to display a still image from the tape.

*postproduction*—refers to work, such as editing, done on producing a videotape after the tape has been recorded.

*preproduction*—refers to work done in preparation for video recording.

*projection video*—a device to project a large video picture on a screen or wall.

*receiver*—a television that can both receive broadcasts and display videotapes from a VCR.

*SECAM*—Séquence de Couleurs avec Mémoire, a television and video standard used in France, the Soviet Union, and several countries in Africa and Asia. See NTSC, PAL.

*standard*—type of videotape, e.g., NTSC, PAL, SECAM.

*tape counter*—a device on a VCR that serves as a guide to locate points on the tape.

*tracking control*—device on a VCR that usually stabilizes the picture and eliminates any breakup of the picture.

*UHF*—ultra-high-frequency television signal (channels higher than 13).

*U-matic*—¾-inch videotape format.

*VCR*—video cassette recorder.

*VHF*—very-high-frequency television signal (channels 2 through 13).

*VHS*—½-inch videotape format.

*video track*—the recorded picture signal on a videotape.

*VTR*—videotape recorder.

APPENDIX

B

# ORGANIZATIONAL RESOURCES

| | |
|---|---|
| Brighton Polytechnic<br>The Language Centre<br>Falmer, Sussex, England | Offers assessment and training in the use of video in language teaching. |
| The British Council<br>10 Spring Gardens<br>London SW1, England | Offers and advises on courses on both how to use and how to produce educational technology, including video for language teaching. |
| Columbia University<br>Teachers College<br>TESOL Program<br>P.O. Box 66<br>New York, NY 10027, USA | Offers workshops and courses on the use of video and related technologies in language teaching. |
| International Association of Teachers of English as a Foreign Language (IATEFL)<br>Video Special Interest Group<br>3 Kingsdown Chambers | A special interest group for users and producers of video for English as a foreign language. Publishes a newsletter, *Small Screen*, organizes video symposia, and sponsors video- |

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|---|---|
| Kingsdown Park<br>Tankerton, Whitstable<br>Kent CT5 2DJ, England | related presentations at IATEFL annual conferences. |
| The IATEFL Video Centre<br>Polytechnic of Central London<br>School of Languages<br>18 Euston Centre<br>London NW1 3ET, England | Maintains a reference collection of published video-based teaching and learning materials and a computer-held database of video materials developed in conjunction with the TESOL video database in the United States. |
| Japan Association of Language Teachers (JALT)<br>Video Special Interest Group<br>Lions Mansion Kawaramachi 111<br>Kawaramachi Matsubara-agaru<br>Shimogyu-ku, Kyoto 600, Japan | Publishes a newsletter, *Video Rising*, and organizes video-related demonstrations and colloquia at annual JALT conferences. |
| Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL)<br>Video Interest Section<br>1600 Cameron Street, Suite 300<br>Alexandria, VA 22314, USA | An international network of classroom users and producers of EFL/ESL video. Publishes a newsletter, *TESOL Video News*, coordinates video-related projects, and organizes video events and presentations at TESOL annual conventions. Maintains a database, *The ESOL Video Materials Directory*, of video materials for ESL/EFL instruction and teacher education. |

APPENDIX

C

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# Video in Second Language Teaching

edited by Susan Stempleski and Paul Arcario

As VCRs and video cameras become increasingly available in classrooms around the world, ESOL professionals are eager to know more about video-related resources and ways they can use the medium effectively to teach English to speakers of other languages. *Video in Second Language Teaching* provides practical and principled advice to inexperienced and experienced teachers who are using or plan to use video in second language teaching.

Ten articles by video experts in the US and Europe profile successful practices and developments in the use, selection, and production of video for EFL/ESL instruction. The authors give practical ideas for using pre-recorded video to teach students of all ages and language levels, suggestions for using the video camera for language instruction and evaluation, information about factors affecting video production for language teaching, and an overview of available EFL/ESL video materials and criteria for their selection.

- Practical advice on planning and carrying out video-based lessons
- Bibliography on video in language teaching
- Glossary of video acronyms and technical terms
- List of organizational resources

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